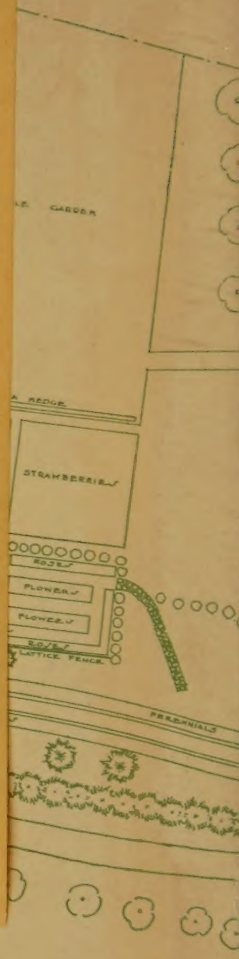
My Garden Comes of Age

JULIA H. CUMMINS



PLAN OF HOUSE & GARDENS AT THE
"CROSS-ROADS"
SCALE

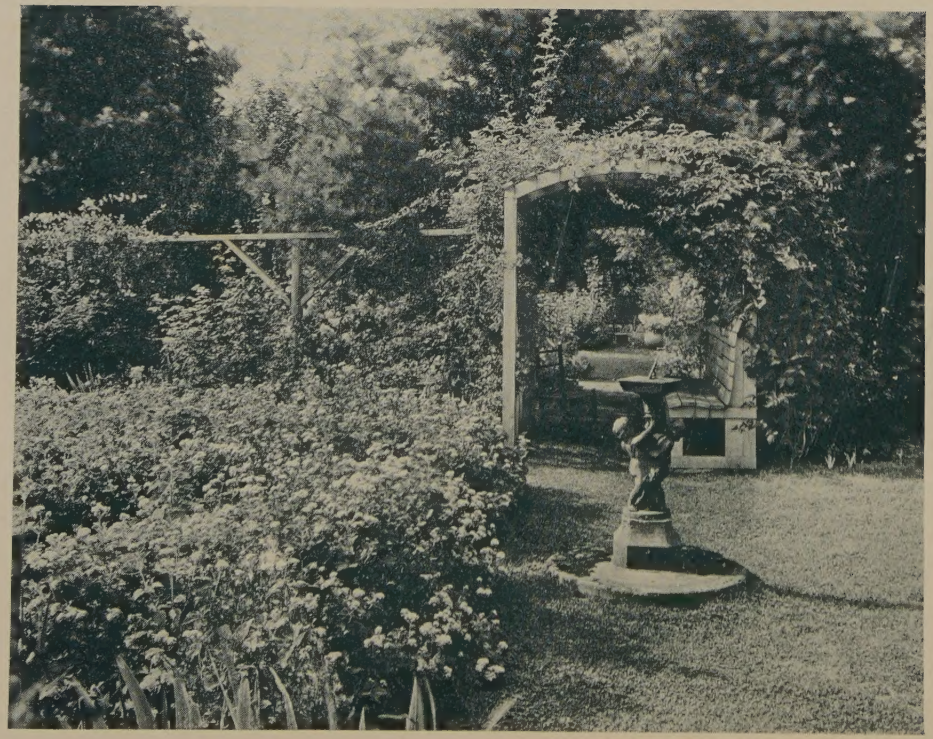
SS/GALB
8/10 00
1st Ehr

MY GARDEN COMES OF AGE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO



The Entrance to the Rose-Garden

(See page 71)

MY GARDEN COMES OF AGE

By

JULIA H. CUMMINS

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1926

All Rights Reserved

COPYRIGHT, 1926, BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.
SET UP AND PRINTED. PUBLISHED OCTOBER, 1926.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE CORNWALL PRESS

TO THE FRAGRANT MEMORY
OF MY LEAH,
WHOSE BEAUTIFUL LITTLE HANDS
LOVED TO GATHER HARMONIES
IN FLOWERS AND MUSIC
TO GIVE TO OTHERS

Foreword

ALMOST important event has taken place in my garden this year, one which should have been celebrated with a cake and twenty-two candles (one to grow on), for the flower borders have reached the ripe age of twenty-one. As a matter of fact no particular attention has been paid to it, for when a garden is frequently born again, or at least rejuvenated, how can birthdays be celebrated?

To make amends for this neglect I shall jot down the story of the garden, and of the house, which is inseparable from it, and of the whole place of which these are the heart.

With some timidity I suggest that the development of my garden has been not unlike the evolution of man in its strange and awful phenomena. For many years it seemed to swing by the tail, and I am not yet quite sure that it stands erect. The tail, I am positive, is still there, and a reversion to type may take place at any moment if one is not watchful.

What that primitive type was may be understood by anyone who has seen an old, neglected meadow, overrun by sour grass and thistles, with out-croppings of unfertile sand, and many wild brambles.

It has not yet evolved into the perfect garden of which I dream, but when I look back upon its humble beginnings and upon my utter ignorance I am not entirely discouraged by present results.

I feel hopeful that my mistakes may be of value to other gardeners who are feeling their way. They are such numerous and such blatant mistakes, and yet the very ones which amateur gardeners are apt to make. They may act as warnings to beginners, while my little successes should be an encouragement to those who are struggling with similar adverse conditions of soil and climate; and I may add that what I have accomplished has been done without any previous knowledge and without large expenditures.

In the foothills of the Adirondacks, where my garden lies, the air is like wine, and the climate is extolled in guidebooks as "salubrious," but alas for the poor gardener! The thermometer in Winter drops from twenty degrees above zero to forty-five below without a moment's hesitation, so to speak. Snow lies in deep drifts from November to the middle of April, or is blown across the meadows by furious winds, leaving the garden all unblanketed.

It is unusual to escape a severe frost at the end of June, and we always look for another by the middle of September. In the few months left us in between we have warm Summers, and the sandy soil is a veritable hot-bed of quick luxuriant growth. But oh, the swarms of devouring insects that it raises,—rose-bugs in flocks like the locust plagues of Egypt, June-bug grubs, and great irridescent blue beetles which cause my white roses and Clematis to vanish as chaff before the wind, all these and hosts of others.

Fortunately the various difficulties of climate and soil never come all at once, and there are always con-

solations and hopes which outweigh them. Moreover, gardening is such a fascinating diversion in itself that difficulties are no more insuperable than are bunkers to a golfer,—they only lend the sense of achievement and the element of chance which make it an art and a sport rather than a humdrum trade.

It is an amusing fact that a true garden lover never sees the discrepancies in his own garden until he takes a stranger there. To him the borders are brilliant with the flowers that are coming next month or that were there last. But an unsympathetic onlooker sees only actualities; to him the bird in the hand is actually worth two in the bush.

Last June I took a city-dweller to see my borders, which to me were lovely with promise. To be sure the Iris buds had all been nipped by late frosts and there were only varying shades of green foliage, but I had not realized how little bloom there was until I caught her wondering look. Then suddenly I knew how the poor deluded King in Hans Anderson's tale must have felt when a little boy cried out, "But he has nothing on."

So in these pages as I take strangers through my slowly evolving garden, I shall try to be quite honest and clear-eyed like that little boy. I shall try to show things as they really are and not as I would have them be. If I succeed in this and never pretend to be more than the humble seeker that I am, I shall hope to win a few friends among those strangers, and help them to escape my pitfalls.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	Foreword	vii
CHAPTER I.	*Discovering a Country Place* .	1
CHAPTER II.	*The Growth of an Idea—The Border*	12
CHAPTER III.	*Adam*	24
CHAPTER IV.	*The Evolution of a Color Scheme*	38
CHAPTER V.	*Practical Things*	49
CHAPTER VI.	*The Rose-Garden*	64
CHAPTER VII.	*Suitability*	78
CHAPTER VIII.	*Remodeling an Old House* . .	93
CHAPTER IX.	*The Building*	111
CHAPTER X.	*My Garden Comes of Age* .	122
CHAPTER XI.	*The Woods and the Wild Garden*	142
CHAPTER XII.	*Making Pictures*	162

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Entrance to the Rose-Garden	*Frontispiece*
	FACING PAGE
"Shelter, background, and privacy"	28
The Entrance to the Borders	42
White Pines as a Background	48
The Borders in June	60
Siberian Iris	74
The Old Shrubbery	80
The House	90
The Dining Room	94
The Entrance Hall	104
Paneling in the Drawing-room	108
The Play Room	117
The Borders in September	128
Looking Towards the Woods	140
The Oval Garden	166
The Fountain	170

MY GARDEN COMES OF AGE

CHAPTER I

Discovering a Country Place

In looking back along the many years to the time when we first decided to spend a summer in the country, it seems hardly credible to me now that the only growing things I had in mind were babies. In fact, the venture was an escape from the city's heat and crowds rather than a symptom of interest in country life, of which I was abysmally ignorant, and I think we spoke (with quite unconscious irony) of going into the "dead country."

Fresh air and open spaces seemed imperative for the welfare of the family, but the requisites I had in mind in a country home were seclusion, a verandah, and a very low rent—a modest list with no suggestion of flowers, fruit, or vegetables.

With this ideal and with a feeling of high adventure I took the train one morning to a charming old village which lies among the hills above our city, and but sixteen miles away. Upon emerging from the stuffy car at my destination I was greeted by the most deliciously bracing air, and by a genial, ruddy old man who informed me that "the rig" was waiting behind the station. I am old-fashioned enough to feel that "the rig," with all its smell of musty straw and horse, was far preferable to the

modern "churn" which now lies in wait beside the station. At all events it did me good service that Spring day when I was looking for a house, and feeling very young and inexperienced.

As we drove along the road to the village the driver chatted pleasantly and gave me much information. There were two houses to be had but he didn't know as they would suit. One was empty but he guessed we could get the key at the Post Office. The other had some people living in part of it but he guessed they would get out if I wanted to rent all of it. Here it was now.

I took a good look from the safe protection of the rig. It was a most remarkable house, octagonal in shape with windows on every facet, and a cupola on top which completed its resemblance to an ink-well. How could one ever find seclusion in this odd structure set directly on the village street?

I suggested to the kindly old driver that we would not disturb the people in residence, but would look first at the empty house. So we jogged on to the Post Office meat-market-grocery-store where I got real help from the Post Mistress, who has been my good friend ever since.

At her suggestion I passed over the empty house in the village, and drove on to one not less empty, but lying two miles away in the real country,—and what lovely country it is! A land of dairy farms with green-shuttered white houses and waving corn fields, great, rolling hills, forests that are called "wood-lots," maple groves which are "sugar-bush," and grand rivers which

rejoice in the name of "criks." It is all peaceful without being tame, and the grandeur of the woods and streams gives it a rare beauty quite different from that of the lush farming district a little farther south.

But perhaps I am prejudiced. I can only say that it won my heart in that two-mile drive, and I was prepared to surmount any obstacles at the other end. The obstacles were all there waiting, but I mean to keep the house itself for a later chapter. It stood rather too close to the road, but it seemed then such an old backwater of a road that it didn't matter. What really counted was that the house was surrounded by magnificent trees,—elms, maples, locusts, oaks and bass woods, many of which must have been standing when the house was built some one hundred and fifty years ago.

In every direction were green fields and swelling hills crowned with woods, with only an occasional distant farm-building to accentuate rather than dispel my longed-for sense of seclusion.

The ground on which the house stood was high, sloping gently from the front across a broad meadow, for, as the old gentleman of the rig informed me, this was known as "the house with the front door on the side." This peculiarity that a farmhouse should stretch lengthwise to the sunset, with only a featureless end paralleling the main road, was not the drawback to me that it evidently was to the village.

I hesitated a moment as to whether I should immediately go inside to explore, or whether I should follow the wagon track that led enticingly through the

field at the rear toward beautiful woods. The house was painted a crude pumpkin yellow and seemed rather bald with no shutters at its vacant windows, but the woods were tremulous with the first Spring green, and there were spreading old apple trees in bloom along the path, and I turned in that direction with a guilty consciousness of duty left behind.

Hurrying with all the avidity of a small boy who has skipped school, I ran across the meadow and into the cool depths of the woods, a fairyland of dappled light and shade, with wild flowers crowding under foot and, at the farther end, a glorious river which, I had been told, formed the northeastern boundary of the property.

On my return the house seemed less yellow, and though the little barn which I passed had a decided sag in the roof, not unlike the back of the old horse which drew the rig, still it would be nice to have a barn, and the apple blossoms were enchanting, and it was Spring.

After this the inside of the house seemed of less importance. Matters that would have been paramount in the minds of older and more experienced housekeepers did not occur to me, such as the condition of the well, the roof, and the kitchen chimney, and I felt quite confident that we could manage. It was enough that the verandah was there, albeit a very recent addition and rather "gingerbready," the seclusion was obvious, and I had remembered to ask about the rent and found it well within the budget.

The only furniture left was an enormous black wal-

nut bed-room "suite," a squatty little pair of andirons, and a rocking chair, but a moving van could bring out our supplementary necessities, and the lack of running water seemed quite a negligible matter. There was a room up stairs, my guide informed me, which the owner had always meant to fix up for a bath-room, but never got round to it.

Then it was time to go back to the down train, and only the fact that there was a short cut to the station enabled me to catch it, that and incessant clucking from the driver. His parting words, "see you later," showed me that he knew women, and was perfectly aware of my unspoken decision.

Our very wise course was to rent the place for two years before buying, at the end of which we were quite certain that it was exactly what we wanted. I have so often seen young people buy hastily and later on find that the life, or the house, or the neighborhood did not at all suit them, that I cannot too strongly advise a year or so of trying out, if possible.

During the first year in the old farm house there was not even the most primitive beginning of a garden-evolution, but in the following Summer I was roused to envy by the very lovely old-fashioned flower borders of a neighbor. There Hollyhocks bloomed to perfection, and masses of Sweet William, Bergamot, Cockscomb, and many brilliant annuals.

The owner of the borders asked if I would like some seedlings from his hot-beds and, upon my delighted assent, promised to send them over in a day or two. Hurrying home I looked over our twenty-five acres

and was totally at a loss to see where I could put the little plants. The place had been unoccupied for years, and its fields were untilled and a veritable jungle of high grass and weeds, but just on the knoll, on which the house stands, we had reclaimed a little lawn, and here, at the front, was still discernable the remains of a round bed.

I shrink with horror now when I think of that round bed in the lawn, lying in no relation to anything and thoroughly shaded by the enormous trees overhead.

I have since learned to appreciate the beauty of wide unbroken lawns sloping from the house, with the straight shadows of the trees resting upon them as reflections in an unruffled pool. But in the space of time left me to find a home for the impending seedlings I felt no sense of shame about the round bed. Here, at least, was something that had existed before and presumably could be cleared again.

The seedlings arrived and with them minute instructions and a dibble made from a broom handle. The dibble is still an invaluable friend, and as I have never found anything better than those directions for setting out young plants I will give them here.

"First have your beds well prepared." This sounded like something in a cookery book, and as it then meant to me only spading up to the depth of eight inches and forking out weeds and grass, I will leave the proper preparation of beds until in due course some knowledge of it came in the development of my garden. But the other rules were conscien-

tiously followed,—"Make a number of holes with the dibble, about a foot apart for annuals, and fill them with water. After this has sunk into the soil put one seedling in each hole to a little below the depth at which it was set before. Plunging the dibble at one side of the hole push the earth against the roots, firm with the hand, and then roughen the earth slightly just about the plant to avoid a hard crust."

All this seemed very complicated to me in my over-conscientious zeal, but a little practice brought ease and reduced the process to a few deft motions. I also remember that my friend cautioned me to "lop off their ears" if the plants had too much top and too little roots, and I found this necessary with the Calendulas which had grown into small trees with lush brittle tops. The smell of their upper leaves as I tore them across was a revelation of how pungent and suggestive the scent of foliage can be.

I remember that there were Zinnias, too, in the round patch in the lawn, but as very little bloom ever came in that shaded place I have no idea what else was planted with such meticulous care. The anæmic green stems grew high in a vain effort to get sunlight, and showed a fatal tendency to lie down in wind or rain.

This was the first failure, and it had a most salutary effect. Never again did I attempt to cut up the lawn or to grow sun-loving flowers in shade. But ambition was whetted, and in the following year, when the place was really our own, more promising attempts were made and more valuable lessons learned, with hope still springing eternal.

What a vast difference the sense of possession makes in our attitude toward a home. No sooner had the old house become ours than its pumpkin color ceased to be a joke and must be altered for white paint and green shutters like its neighbors. A sense of pride was awakened in trying to raise our own vegetables, though the results were meagre owing to the quack-grass which had gained a rampant growth everywhere. My flowers were more successful though still badly misplaced. A narrow bed was dug along the east and south sides of the house, where the soil seemed to be made up largely of mortar and stones from the old foundations, and after a vast amount of work it was cleared and planted. Among other things I had ordered "a collection" of twelve sorts of Phloxes with visions of great clumps such as I had seen in the gardens of friends. When the packet of twelve sorry little stalks arrived, I could have wept with disappointment. However, they were planted and those that survived the shaded, unsuitable conditions at the base of the house remained to go in my later borders and formed the nucleus of what is now a rather fine showing of Phlox paniculata.

Planting directly about a house seems to me to require special care and experience. The little cottage gardens in England are charming, but we seldom see the type of house in America to be set off by that sort of planting. There is usually a high bare foundation that might better be lowered by terraces or concealed by low shrubbery or dwarf evergreens, rather than set off by formal flower beds.

But to go back to those early years,—I cannot remember that much was done toward improvements in either house or grounds. Life was delightfully simple with plenty of time for a book and a hammock, with real friends when they were wanted instead of mere callers, and with old clothes and a sand-box for the babies instead of a chronic condition of being dressed up in a perambulator.

All this was a good start in life for the babies, and an equally good beginning for a country home. If only we could learn patience in building or planting instead of striving for immediate effects many of our mistakes, so patent all through the country, might be avoided.

For those who have the means, and the ambition, to create in a year a beautiful country estate, which has the mellowness of a century, I have no message. It is possible in these days to rub the Aladdin Lamp of gold and to build castles of antiqued brick or stone, to move great trees, and to lay out gardens with old Yews or Box which lend an atmosphere of age, but I doubt whether even Aladdin, after the first shock of surprise, felt much pleasure in what, after all, was the work of a Jinn.

Planting little by little and seeing a place grow under one's hand is a solid satisfaction, and even if the means are available to do otherwise why should one hand over all the fun and excitement to someone else? The preliminary time of living and learning is never wasted, for, perhaps unconsciously, it is a period when real needs and appreciations are being developed. One

of the most successful country houses that I know was built only after its owners for two years had picknicked in all seasons on all the available building sites on the land. Cord and stakes were used to lay out imaginary foundations, and sandwiches were munched on supposed verandahs or at windows facing possible views. When at last the site was decided upon it was exactly right, and there were never any regrets.

As our house was decidedly ready-made, and as its one hundred and fifty years made it a doubtful venture to move, lest, like the Deacon's One Horse Shay, it should all go to pieces at once, our problem was not to create anew but to develop possiblities that were already there. These possibilities are seldom visible at once, particularly to young or inexperienced eyes, and therefore patience and time are as much needed in the development of the old as in the building of a new place.

Certainly our preliminary years of "just living" were not wasted. I can remember that the plans and imaginary changes were quite as delightful as shopping with one's nose glued to a show window, and quite as economical.

Friendships were made with the neighbors, some of them local characters never to be forgotten, and some notion of country life and farming infiltrated even my untutored brain. Among my first acquaintances was the old man who acted as agent for the owners of the house. He was reputed to be the "richest man in the county," but his appearance would never have given a hint of this,—on the contrary it was exactly that of

Father Time, with white beard blowing back and always a scythe over one shoulder. In our early acquaintance he spent many hours talking with me on the verandah about what he had done for his employers, and I was given to understand that he was indispensable to their welfare. On one occasion as I sat in the old wooden rocking chair, which, with the andirons and the black walnut "suite" had constituted the furnishings of the house, he waxed quite eloquent and I thought I detected a tear in his eye as he described to me the white-haired old lady who had always sat in that chair and to whom it was sacred. This was most disturbing and I volunteered at once to send the family chair to its owners. At this Father Time exhibited uneasiness and the tear disappeared. He assured me that this would not be necessary but that $15.00, or possibly $12.00, paid to him and forwarded by him would be perfectly satisfactory. This aroused my suspicions and helped to explain his fabulous wealth, but did not prevent my adding to it, as, for several summers, I bought raspberries and blackberries from him before I discovered that I was buying my own berries from my own fields.

So, gradually, we fitted into our surroundings, and our place grew up about us. If my first attempts at flowers and vegetables bore but lean results in actualities, they nevertheless brought that invaluable experience which each individual must acquire for himself, and meanwhile it was always possible to fall back upon wild flowers and the vegetables that come in tin cans.

CHAPTER II

The Growth of An Idea—the Border

Many modern gardening books advise the employment of a landscape gardener in laying out one's grounds. If a new house is to be built they recommend that the architect and the landscape gardener work together from the very start so that the levels, the vistas, the axes and all the topography of the place shall be in perfect harmony and have a consistent design from the first.

This, I presume, is excellent advice for people of means, but I would sound a note of warning. If you wish the place to express your tastes and your individuality, let the development of the plans rest in your own hands, to be done as a whole or bit by bit as your resources and inclinations direct.

It is fatally easy to hand everything over to a competent man, but when the work is finished your sense of detachment will be like that of the board of managers of a perfectly equipped orphan asylum—it is all just as it should be but the children are, after all, orphans.

Keep something for your very own if it be but a little corner. You will realize then how much real pleasure there is in the actual creation and growth of that bit.

In starting a garden yourself you will need a practical gardening book, just as a young housekeeper depends upon a reliable cook-book, and in both cases time and experience will do the rest. Not all gardening books take into consideration the beginner with small means, but some do and there is a book for every stage of our education. As we outgrow the simpler ones, we can still feel grateful for what they have done for us in the past.

I was curiously ignorant of any such literature and had seen but few good gardens when I started my own. Even now, as I read the many delightful books of today, I feel sure that they would not have helped very much in my early evolution. Aside from the fact that they would have been too advanced for me when I was still in the primer stage, there would have been the difficulty that they often take for granted a large preliminary expenditure, and fail to give the helpful suggestions which a beginner needs in laying out a garden.

In my own case there could have been little question of levels, axes, and vistas even had I known that such things existed.

I do not wish to seem to under-estimate the importance of design,—it is, of course, the necessary frame-work of all beauty,—but I think it may be interesting to show how a little common sense and a realization of what one really wants will go a long way towards designing a simple garden.

There are three questions the answers to which assist in solving this problem. They are why, where,

and when do you want a garden? The first must be well thought out before the second is considered. Do you want a garden merely for cutting, so that you can have a constant supply of fresh flowers about the house? Then the answer to the second can be solved by utilizing part of the vegetable garden, and by planting your flowers in straight rows where they can most easily be tended.

Most of us go further than this. We want a garden because we would like to see flowers from our windows, or because we would like to live in it, or any one of a dozen reasons involving beauty of effect. When we know why we want it the choosing of a location is much simplified.

The answer to the third question determines whether it is to be a Spring, Summer, or all-year-round garden, and this reminds me of a story which shows how necessary this third question is. A would-be gardener decided that she must have a garden because (answer to first question) she wanted to grow every sort of Phlox, a flower she preferred to all others. In describing her preference it developed that she had been attracted to Phloxes by seeing them every year at the seashore where she always spent July and August. A Phlox garden at home seemed scarcely the best choice under the circumstances, and she was persuaded to confine her list of flowers to those which would bloom in May and June.

On a place of any size it is of inestimable benefit to have lived there for a time or to know it thoroughly before selecting the site for the garden. I had had the

advantage of two years of tenancy before the purchase of the place made it seem possible to do anything really permanent. The round bed in the lawn was but a forced expedient, and the flower planting about the house was one of the mistakes from which I gathered experience.

Looking back twenty-one years I try to remember just how I thought out that first step in my evolution. The house was an old one whose original quaintness had been superseded by so-called improvements. Among these was a small "ginger-bready" verandah which reached a short distance across the front of the house. As this was our only out-of-doors sitting place I had to consider whether it would be possible to have a delightful flower garden to look into from this verandah.

It did not seem advisable, for the entrance driveway ran immediately in front of the porch, and beyond that the lawn was too shaded by great trees. The same shaded conditions prevailed at the other side of the house, and a strong sweep of wind across the lawn made it doubly impracticable.

The loveliest feature of the place was a wood of beech, hemlock, elm, and maple, ten acres in extent, through which a path led to the river, a splendid rushing stream which the Indians called Kanata or Amber River.

The approach from the house to the woods was through a rough uncut meadow past an old barn and the vegetable garden.

The path through the woods was well defined but

there was no apparent connection between it and the house, except a faint wagon track through the meadow made by a long succession of picknickers with whom the woods had been a favorite spot.

The natural idea came to me that there should be a linking up of this lovely woodland trail and river with the house and the rest of the place. Why then should not this approach be the feature of the garden and the reason for its existence? The obvious outcome of this idea was a double flower border flanking a walk through the meadow.

I felt so sure of the inherent rightness of this plan that I could scarcely wait to put it into execution, but the difficulties were many. First and foremost there were hosts of other needs that took precedence of the purely ornamental, so that the finances for the scheme were at a low ebb. Then, too, the distance to be spanned seemed interminable and my ignorance of how to set about the task illimitable. The only available labor was furnished by my next door neighbor, a farmer, and by an old man who came twice a week from the village to help, as far as his feebleness allowed.

Nevertheless, in the first year of real ownership the borders were planned and dug. There was no possibility of remaking the house or barn, or changing the driveway, or of employing expert advice,—in short it was a question of adaptation to conditions as they were, and not of reconstruction, and as this is so often the case with young people starting out in life my own experience may be of interest.

The simplest method of planning the location of the path and borders was to walk as directly and easily as possible from the door of the house to the entrance of the woods trail, avoiding rough hillocks and old apple trees, rather than hewing a straight path through them.

Many years afterward a most capable landscape architect volunteered to make a plan for changing my borders. "We will move them," he said, "twenty feet to the left, make them uniformly straight throughout, and increase the width of the beds to ten feet. We will move your evergreen windbreak a corresponding distance," etc., etc. If I had agreed to this and abandoned the work of years there would have been, as a reward, a view of the borders from an upper bedroom window at the northeast end of the house, and a straight vista of flowers instead of a slightly meandering path.

In the face of this trained advice I refused to change my original plan and still feel that the spirit and idea that prompted it were right.

My object was first of all to secure an easy and attractive approach to the woods. There was at this early date no possibility of a view of the proposed garden from the house as neither verandah nor windows could command such a vista. Neither was it possible to make a close link between house and garden path for the entrance driveway separated them, and the close proximity of an old barn had also to be considered.

So it seemed best to keep the garden as a thing

apart, a surprise and a quiet refuge from the house and its complexities of housekeeping and babies, a peaceful walk between gay stretches of flowers that would entice one on to the sombre grandeur of wood and river. A straight open border seemed too formal and sudden an entrance to this woodland peace, and the path, slightly curving to the natural contours of the meadow, had more the feeling that was in character and harmony with the whole place.

Starting on my walk, therefore, from the front verandah, I stepped into the driveway and followed it around the northeast end of the house, and, where it seemed most direct to turn off toward the woods, I did so, and passed the end of the barn. The old barn has long since gone, but the space in front of it had then to be kept open, so I planned to treat it as a lawn and to put stepping stones to mark the approach to where the actual garden path and borders would begin. From this point, having thought it out and walked it out many times, I enlisted the help of my neighbor with his plough and horses. I walked ahead as steadily and naturally as possible with the sweating horses pounding at my heels and the farmer turning the furrow that was to mark the first outline of the border. The whole distance was two hundred and forty-two feet, and the passage was stormy. Unexpected boulders and roots cropped up under the plough, and the briars and blackberry brambles caught and tore hands and clothing, but when we reached the woods and looked back the plan had proved itself a success. The furrow lay clean and convincing, though

not perfectly straight as the farmer would have liked.

After this we ploughed out the two borders parallel to the first furrow, each bed two and a half feet wide, and the path between five feet so as to allow two people to walk comfortably abreast.

The proportions were bad, the beds being pitifully narrow for their length, but I was cutting my pattern according to my cloth and that was meagre. When I thought of filling those endless strips they seemed of quite enormous size.

This ploughing was deep and was followed by a generous coating of manure, and a thorough harrowing in with a one-horse cultivator. Later the beds were forked up more thoroughly and raked by the feeble old man, who was yet another argument for the two and a half foot limitation. The path, which was rough and weedy, was dug out to the depth of four or five inches and filled with gravel from the bed of a nearby stream. This "wash-gravel" does not pack well and should be avoided. A turf path is far lovelier but needs more care than I was able to give. Board edgings were used and painted dark green.

Now all this was the cheapest and quickest way to get results, and served to give much pleasure for several years. I do not suggest it as the ideal way to prepare beds or to lay a path but it was a practicable start and the beginning of the evolution of my garden.

At a distance of one hundred and ten feet from the entrance of my borders we made a little cross-path of turf which led at the left to a spreading old apple

tree and a seat, and at the right, through a little arbor, to my vegetable garden. Of the latter I shall speak later, but as the east side of it lay parallel with my borders and about eight feet behind them, I must describe how it was planted to screen the practical from the ornamental. A simple trellis of cedar posts eight feet high with two by four-inch timbers laid across the top, was set along the edge of the vegetable garden. Honeysuckle and Japanese Clematis vines were planted to grow over the posts. Behind these two lines of rose bushes were planted and then the vegetable garden began.

It was quite natural that for a few years the borders should have been filled with annuals,—they were quickly and cheaply raised from seed, had long periods of bloom, and did not require great depth of soil, all virtues that admirably suited my conditions at that time.

I can see them now lying like long strips of gay ribbon thrown carelessly from the bolt,—Shirley and Giant Poppies with Candytuft as an edging, Calendulas, Eschscholtzias, Antirrhinums, Stocks, Hollyhocks, Mignonette, Balsams, Nasturtiums, English Daisies and Asters, with Sweet Alyssum in between and everywhere to soften discordant colors.

I have painful recollections of sowing the Poppies. First the seeds were mixed with fine sand so as not to sow too quickly, and then they had to be pressed down firmly to avoid being washed to the back of the bed at the first shower. After wearying experience of crawling about on hands and knees and patting with

a heavy wooden block, I had the inspiration to use an iron rake. After pressing the seeds down with the flat of the rake the soil was left firmed but roughened, and so had less tendency to form a hard crust. Better still, my back and knees were saved.

I used the same method with Sweet Alyssum, which with me is still a stand-by for edgings and for reconciling difficult colors. It has a gray tinge in its white flower which is always a peacemaker and its quiet fragrance and resistance to hot sun and drought, as well as to frost, make it invaluable in my borders. Moreover, it has the accommodating habit of growing even better in my gravel path than in the good garden soil, and of self sowing. I always allow it to spread in occasional drifts in the path and to spring up at each side of the wooden edging to conceal it.

I am sure that the greatest discrepancy in those early ribbon borders must already have been evident to my readers. I felt it poignantly from the first and tried in various unskilled ways to overcome it. This was the lack of background and of height and variety in the planting. The gay ribbons stretching across a rough meadow looked rather of the "Tom Thumb" variety, and the two gnarled old apple trees and the vegetable garden trellis were all that relieved the flatness.

One of my first expedients was to grow tall and luxuriant plants in the borders, and for this I selected Ricinus and Water Hemlock (Cicuta maculata). The Ricinus, or Castor Oil plant, was a fit subject for the round bed in the lawn and was abandoned after a few

seasons, but it did grow amazingly in the hot sand and gave a tropical luxuriance which was some excuse for its being. The Water Hemlock gathered from the roadside, had equally good qualities of height and foliage, but the fact that it was poisonous and that its strange pyrotechnic blossoms suggested radio stations made it quite out of place in the garden. Hollyhocks proved helpful, as it is not at all unusual for them to grow eight or ten feet high in our soil, and they are easily raised from seed in a spare row in the vegetable garden.

Looking over my bright beds I still felt that there was something wrong, a haphazard, unrestful feeling about them. One remedy for this was discovered quite accidentally. It happened when I planted my Ricinus in big clumps exactly opposite each other. I realized then that there must be balance in a garden. Just as when we put a pair of vases on a mantle piece, one at each end, we find the effect pleasing, so in a double border a similar planting at stated intervals on both sides gives, not monotony, but restfulness.

The greatest defect, the lack of background, I realized but did not know how to remedy. As a background of foliage of some sort is essential to any flower garden, however small, I would advise a beginner to plan for it from the first. It is necessary not only to show off the flowers, but also as a boundary, and in the form of a shrubbery, hedge, or vine-covered wall to give that feeling of privacy and shut-inness which is the greatest charm of a garden.

All this I could have learned from books, but as a

matter of fact I learned it little by little from the very natural desire to live in my garden. One simply does not live in the midst of a wind-swept meadow between two beds of flowers, however lovely. I had achieved my first object to make an alluring walk to the woods, but like all human experience, I had enlarged my circle only to find that the wider circumference opened up wider vistas, and that the evolution was still only in its infancy.

CHAPTER III

Adam

My neighbors in the country favor a pattern in rag-rug weaving which they call "hit-or-miss" and this is an admirable term to describe my early gardening, but after a few years an event occurred which shed an entirely new light on the problem. Up to that time there had been various makeshifts to get the work of the place done, but experence showed that it was impossible to depend upon outside help in a locality where the farmers were hard pressed to get through their own work.

Therefore it was with some excitement, and a feeling that the hand of Fate might be in it, that I read one morning in the daily paper a very modest little "want ad" to the effect that a steady and reliable man wanted a situation as gardener or caretaker on a country place, and signed "Adam." Of course it was the "Adam" that clinched the matter, and in a very few days there had been letters back and forth and an understanding reached which culminated in my first interview with my new gardener.

Adam greeted me from the top of the manure pile which he was turning in preparation for the hot-beds and it seems to me now that there was something symbolical in that situation. Adam has never been a

gardener of great initiative, not what I should call a creative genius, but he has a knowledge of the fundamentals—the preparation of the soil and the right way to plant, which are worth everything. To see his fingers spreading out the roots of a plant and firming the earth about them is to see a fine task perfectly done.

A short time ago I asked "How long have you been with us, Adam?", for my knowledge of time is always vague, even as to the ages of my children. He ruminated, Adam can never be hurried, and scraped his boots on the side of his spade as he always does in moments of mental stress, "It'll be seventeen year coming next April, that is not counting the summer I went back to the old country."

Could it be possible? It seemed so short a time since, in that first interview, we discussed the work of the place, for Adam was to be man-of-all-work as well as gardener. In the seventeen years intervening, he has grown into the place with far-reaching tenacious roots, he is now as much a part of it as the many trees he has planted and every growing thing which he knows so well. On its twenty-five acres there is not a bird's nest or wild flower that he has not discovered, and no nest can be disturbed until the last bird is fledged and flown.

I remember so well one Spring, when building was being done, that there was a most unsightly shed made of old bits of boards to protect the new lumber and standing as an eyesore in full view from the house. The builder had promised that this should be removed

by May the first, but before that time Adam had found a wren's nest built over the sliding door in such a way that the latter could not be entirely closed. Moreover, said he, the shed could not be torn down until the wren had hatched out her eggs. The outcome was that we had the shed all summer. Between the amorous little wrens and Adam there was a perfect understanding and "the wrennery," as we called it, remained intact until deserted in the Fall.

I like to take my chair and book and sit in the garden near where Adam is working. Sometimes he is silent for hours at a time, working with a most amazing slowness and steadiness, and sometimes he has periods of facile loquacity. Anecdotes run on and on without point or climax, but with an enthralling quality which cannot be described. H's are lost and found again in unexpected places, and when the narrative is interrupted by necessary trips with the wheelbarrow it is taken up again with the same word and with apparently no mental interruption.

Adam's first achievement was to make a real vegetable garden in place of the attempt at one which was the result of my early struggles. When I think of the years of patient unremitting warfare he has waged against quack-grass and poor soil I cannot be too thankful, but my thoughts turn inevitably away from the vegetables to the flowers, and it is to our improvements in the borders that my memory reverts.

The much lamented lack of background and privacy was the subject of many conferences, also the ex-

posed position of the borders which suffered from the strong west and north winds sweeping across them from the meadows. The combination of my ambition and Adam's sound sense resulted in a most successful solution of the problem.

In June and September (two good evergreen planting months with us) Adam, unaided except by my moral support, planted a long windbreak of American Arbor Vitæ (Thuja Occidentalis) at the northwest side of the borders, about fifteen feet behind them, and reaching almost to the woods. There is a curious natural grove of these trees growing in the meadow to the west of the woods. They grow quite by themselves and form hollow spaces with connecting passages which, as "little rooms," have been the delight of my children, and probably of generations before them. In the field about there is an almost constant supply of young trees coming up, and it was from among these that we got the material for the windbreak.

They were perhaps six feet high when transplanted, and as the holes were ready for the trees before they were shifted, they scarcely felt the move, and now form a solid wall twenty feet high.

Arbor Vitæ have not the perfect form of the Red Cedar as they usually branch into several trunks instead of forming one, but the outline is conical, and if they are cut back and heavily trimmed they will form a splendid windbreak or hedge.

We have gradually filled the space between the borders and the windbreak with shrubs, planting a few

every year. With the planting of the windbreak, shelter, background, and privacy came to my borders, and I could turn with new enthusiasm to their contents.

Annuals were gradually dropped to the position of "fillers," or to use theatrical terms, they became understudies to the perennials who took the "leads." My old notebook shows another advancement, for in the list of seeds ordered each year there was a constant tendency from the general to the particular,—during the early years there were many packets of mixtures and but few named varieties, later the mixtures were confined to such flowers as Nasturtiums, Calliopsis and Poppies, where only a brilliant mass of color was desired.

Here I must say a word of how I obtained material for those long beds, and give a few suggestions for raising plants taken from my own experience.

I have always grown the majority of my plants from seed, perennials as well as annuals. It is not difficult to raise the perennials of which seed is advertised in nursery catalogues, and one has only to turn the pages to the list of plants to see what a saving is made by buying seeds rather than plants. The only drawback is that we are often in too much of a hurry to wait the two or three years that must elapse before perennials so raised can form big clumps. In my notebook I find a touching confidence, in those early days, that every seed planted would grow. Great surprise is expressed in July—"Cannot see that the Phloxes have come up. Perhaps it would be safer to try plants."

I realized early the advantage of hot-beds in our cli-

"Shelter, background, and privacy"

mate, and I remember quite clearly the making of them, or what the builder called "knocking them together," (he was, I think, a plumber temporarily out of work). The frames were made of odd boards found in the barn, very suggestive of fence rails, and so rough that one's hands were always full of splinters after working in them, but they served their purpose well and lasted for years. The sash were old window frames found in the attic of the house, further victims of the "improvements" which had replaced their quaint twenty-four pane sash with cheap modern windows furnished with maddening side-catches which either refused to hold at all or stuck persistently.

In northern latitudes, where Spring is late and frosts threaten until the middle of June, it is almost necessary to have some sort of hot-bed or cold-frame so that seedlings can be well grown and rooted by the time it is possible to set them out.

Directions for building these frames can be found in any horticultural book or the frames and sash can be ordered at small expense from mail-order houses, but after back-breaking experience, I advise that they be set as high above the ground as possible, so that one can sit on the edge or in a low chair to work in them.

Annuals and perennials should be sowed in separate frames if possible. The former germinate so much more quickly than the latter that if they are sowed together the annuals will be sturdy seedlings needing to be shaded and cooled, while the perennials still require the full heat of the glass. Annuals can also be

started in boxes in the house, or sown out of doors where they are to remain.

Biennials, such as Sweet Williams, Canterbury Bells, Foxgloxes, and Pansies may be sowed in the frames without the glass after the earlier seedlings have been transplanted, preferably in August, or may easily be grown out of doors in well prepared seed beds. They will make good sized plants ready to be moved to their permanent positions in September, and will bloom the next Summer.

Biennials, as the name indicates, grow one year, bloom the next and die, so that it takes eternal vigilance to keep them "in stock." But many of them are so lovely that they are indispensable, and in sandy soil some of them self-sow and are practically perennial. This is true of Hollyhocks, Foxgloves, English Daisies and Sweet Williams, but, as these do not always come true from seed, they must be watched carefully for bad mixtures and colors which should be ruthlessly weeded out.

I think that I enjoyed my early garden with its lack of color scheme quite as much as I do my later more self-conscious efforts, but as one's garden evolves one must evolve with it, or is it the other way round? At all events I could not go back to the old way now, and the delight of gardening is that there is always something fresh and new to accomplish. It is the most stimulating of all hobbies, and it has myriads of different interests and forms of expression. Adam has been an invaluable check upon this sometimes dangerous enthusiasm. He has saved me from many wild

and impracticable schemes, not by any spoken word, but by a certain impassive silence which I have learned to recognize as disapproval and this acts as does the Senate upon too radical a House.

As we increased the stock of perennials in the borders, and the problem of filling the long spaces became less and less acute, Adam widened the beds to about six feet and thus vastly improved the proportions. He also planted a windbreak of Arbor Vitæ at the eastern side of the border, not in a straight line but curving behind the old apple trees to conceal the hotbeds, and reaching to the vegetable garden. During these early years there were so many things accomplished which have since grown into the landscape that I cannot remember them all, but I know that the wind-breaks, the vegetable garden, and the widening and improving of the borders took much of our time.

For seven years the borders continued as they had first been made, except for this widening and the improvement in the planting. Every Fall a heavy top dressing of manure was applied and worked into the beds the following Spring, and wood ashes, saved from the fireplaces, were used to stimulate quick growth. At the end of seven years, however, a complete change seemed necessary, just as the entire composition of the human body is popularly supposed to change during that period. I had for some time noticed that sections of the beds seemed run out and sandy in spite of top dressing, particularly the stretch from the cross path to the woods, in which the flowers were growing

smaller and poorer and for the last fifteen feet were scarcely worth the name.

Also there had been brewing in my mind, like so much yeast, a general dissatisfaction with the color scheme, or rather with the lack of one. I had managed to get some lovely effects and combinations of color in spots, but the harmonies were not continuous and there were seasons when the only solution was to pick discordant flowers as soon as they appeared. I have a friend, an interior decorator, with a nice taste in flowers as well as houses, who caught me at this task one morning and termed it "tweaking out false notes."

Only those who have tried to make a long herbaceous border can know how difficult it is to have something in bloom all the way, all the time, and all in harmony. In fact I sometimes think it is only those whose gardens are still in their minds who have really accomplished it. The wisest plan for the beginner in any sort of garden is to decide first what months are the most important to him there, and to crowd all the bloom he can into that period. I am still thinking of the average gardener and not of those fortunate beings who can have gardens for every month, all quite separate and so arranged that in off seasons they are invisible.

As our early months are cold and not conducive to sitting out of doors, and as my borders are not seen from the house, it seems sensible to concentrate on the Summer months, June, July, August, and the first half of September.

I say sensible, though I have never quite had the courage to leave out some of the Spring bulbs and May flowers,—and as I grow older, instead of practicing what I preach, I find myself discovering many more treasures which cannot be left out, but my theory is right all the same.

I had read much good garden literature during the seven years but, fortunately for me, the books that came to my aid at the climax of my dissatisfaction with the border were the excellent gardening books (both in a practical and literary sense), by Miss Gertrude Jekyll. Her "Woods and Garden" and "Color in the Garden," I learned to know almost by heart.

There were few days during that seventh August when Adam was allowed to work in peace. I with my chair and Miss Jekyll hung upon his flank like a gadfly. Ways and means and methods were discussed at length, lists of American plants were made which might give the same effect as the too tender or unknown English varieties, manure was bought up from the nearest available sources, and by the middle of September all was in readiness for the entire remaking of the borders.

First we drove stakes every ten feet at the inside of the border, as I had planned my replanting in sections of that length. Then Adam dug up all the plants in the first section on one side of the path, leaving plenty of soil on the roots for protection. By digging only ten feet at a time one does not leave the poor lifted plants too long out of their native habitat, like fish out of water. He laid the small plants and the

bulbs on the gravel walk so that they would not be overlooked, and the large clumps were lifted well behind the border so as to be out of harm's way. If the day happened to be very sunny or windy he covered the roots with soil or burlap to prevent drying out, and he always placed them as nearly as possible opposite where they had stood so that we could easily identify them.

Then the actual digging was begun and was done by the method known as trenching. The beds were dug two feet deep, a depth sufficient to take care of the deepest rooted perennials, and all big stones were removed. Beginning at the entrance, two feet of earth was excavated to a depth of two feet and was wheeled to the end of the border. Then Adam put a good layer of manure in the bottom of the hole, trod it down, and filled in a layer of top soil from the next two feet of bed, then more manure and more soil forked in with it, and so on until the first two-foot excavation was filled and another of the same size was ready for the same treatment. Thus all the earth in the borders was shifted along and thoroughly enriched. The good top soil now at the bottom made a cool rich foundation to tempt deep, drought-resisting roots downward. When the entire ten feet of the section had been thus treated the plants were reset according to the new arrangement, or were "heeled in" in the vegetable garden to await a different location. Bruised roots were lopped off, clumps which needed to be divided, such as Phlox and Iris, were pulled or cut apart, new plants were added, and the whole planting

of the section was completed before the one on the opposite side of the path was started. This opposite side always took less time because it was planted with much similarity.

I dwell with some particularity on this trenching system because it seems to me the ideal way to prepare beds, new or old, and while it is more thorough than the usual method of throwing out all the dirt to one side and then filling in, I do not believe that it is as long or arduous. It is the English system and we have yet to improve upon their methods in gardening.

As the work progressed I mapped out the position of the plants on paper, drawing each section to scale in a very amateurish way quite within the capacity of the merest tyro, and I found these dirt-stained sheets very valuable in my winter planning and ordering for many years. A trained landscape architect would have mapped them all out before and not after planting, but my "before" planning was confined to a color scheme and a list of plants for each section, and was considerably modified as the roots proved larger or smaller than I had expected. One rule I observed then and have always found wise, plant thickly and thin later if necessary. I abhor great patches of bare earth as Nature does a vacuum, and though occasionally a wet Summer results in too dense a jungle in my borders, the usual result of the thick planting is fewer weeds and a better resistance to hot weather, but, of course, one must give plenty of fertilization and cultivation in such congested quarters.

As the farther end of the border was reached the

earth excavated proved to be the poorest sort of sand and it was necessary to add good loam from some source, for the woods had drained all the richness out of the beds.

My first inspiration for obtaining good soil was to dredge the bottom of a little pond which lay between the woods and the river, for it looked as though the accumulation of centuries of leaves had rotted there and could be had with little labor. I cannot now imagine why Adam did not put his quietus upon this scheme at the start. I only remember that it was received with great applause by the genial old Welshman, Evan Evans, who was acting as helper to Adam. I therefore withdrew him from his useful work, and sent him to dig a ditch from the pond so that it should drain into the river and enable us to get the rich muck for the garden.

In the course of a few hours Evan Evans returned with uproarious gaiety to tell me "By damn, Missus, instead of the pond go out the crik she come in."

Adam and I hurried down to find this startling news quite corroborated. The river, which was in flood, was rushing into the pond, and the latter was rapidly rising. The ditch was hastily filled in and then Evan, in high rubber boots, waded into the pond to investigate. It was soon proved that the center of the pond was deeper than the river though it gave the effect of a shallow bit of water, and the investigation proved further that the bottom consisted of hard clay with not enough muck to bring back in a bucket. There was nothing to do but to echo the robust laughter

which shook Evan as he stood hip deep in the water and plumbed the depths with a hoe.

As this spot was at least eighteen hundred feet from the borders, it was not without chagrin that I saw the two return to the garden and not twenty feet from their digging find the desired loam in an old potato field. There is, after all, everything in knowing how.

CHAPTER IV

The Evolution of a Color Scheme

All gardeners know the breathless excitement attendant upon the making of a new garden, the anxious searching of nursery catalogues for new and desirable plants, the sudden inspirations and the equally rapid disillusionments.

How many times during my first struggle for a color scheme did I falter on the brink of discouragement as desired combinations refused to work out, some plants blooming too late to create an effect with their neighbors, or flowering unexpectedly early so that they formed discords where they should have provided only a background of foliage.

Occasionally perennials with impressive Latin names, selected because of their glowing description in catalogues, turned out to be familiar and not too desirable old acquaintances. Others by their unfamiliarity proved that common names vary in different localities, and cannot be depended upon in ordering.

If gardening meant immediate and definite results, as concrete as the fact that two and two make four, such failures would make a quick end of amateur efforts. But I have learned gradually from experience that the joy and satisfaction of gardening lie largely in

the doing, not in results, and that there is far more in it than meets the eye.

The problem of finding satisfactory substitutes for Miss Jekyll's planting material proved a fascinating study. Some of the plants she used were distasteful to me, like Cannas and Golden Glow, some, like Dahlias, were too quickly destroyed by the first touch of frost to deserve a place in my hardy border,—many could not be grown in this climate,—and others were not procurable.

Moreover, I did not wish to imitate too closely Miss Jeckyll's English border, it was largely her arrangement of colors that I attempted, and even that I found it necessary to modify.

Miss Jekyll's border is single and has a wall at the back, it is two hundred feet long and fourteen feet wide and is intersected about three-quarters of the way along by a cross path. At the foot of the wall is a three and a half foot bed in which grow climbers and shrubs, and between this and the wide border is a little alley to facilitate work at the back.

My borders are double, are two hundred and forty-two feet long, and each is six feet wide. At the back is a windbreak of evergreens with shrubs planted at their feet, and a narrow stretch of lawn to allow easy access to the back of the border.

I am afraid that the likeness between the English border and mine begins and ends with a slight similarity in length and cross path, but slight as it is it encouraged me to think that I might adapt the color arrangement to my conditions with some success. Miss

Jekyll's very valuable suggestion to use broad and simple effects, both of grouping and color, I found more difficult in a bed six feet wide than it would have been in one of fourteen feet, but I clung to it as closely as I knew how, and made all my plantings in long oval masses rather than in round clumps. In this way the plantings intermingle and run in together instead of giving a set, spotty look to the beds. Tall varieties were planted at the back and occasionally allowed to run forward almost to the front to give variety in height.

I will give a summary of Miss Jekyll's color scheme as described in her "Woods and Garden," Chapter XVI, beginning at the entrance of her border, and then try to remember how I worked it out in mine, though I have long since lost the soiled and worn plans.

1. Yuccas.
2. Masses of important gray and glaucous foliage with pale and full pink bloom.
3. Whitish and pale flowers.
4. Pale yellow and pale blue.
5. Pale yellow and deep blue.
6. More pale yellow.
7. Passing to stronger yellow.
8. Changing into orange.
9. Changing to brilliant scarlet and crimson.
10. Then again through orange.
11. To yellow and then pale yellow.
12. Blue and warm white Yuccas.

Cross path.

Across the path pinks, and pale yellows, and gray foliage.

As the first division of Miss Jekyll's border up to her cross path was almost sixty feet longer than mine, I found it impossible to make the twelve gradations in colors in my shorter space, and after a most unsuccessful attempt to work up through orange to scarlet and crimson, I left out the two latter colors entirely. This was a cowardly compromise but it is a wise man who knows his own limitations and I found in my Hollyhocks all the shades of red that I could manage.

To start then with my own borders,—at the entrance I felt the need of an important feature that would yet be in keeping with the simplicity of the place. The solution of the problem proved to be a real inspiration, for it transformed what had been an eyesore in one place to a useful addition in another.

This was a rustic seat on the lawn with a rustic roof built over it and covered with a Bitter-sweet vine. It had evidently been there for many years, for the vine was an old one. The innumerable nails which held the bits of wood in the intricate pattern of the back and seat protruded dangerously and impaled the unwary sitter. It resembled some strange torture of the Inquisition and was as ugly as it was uncomfortable, but it had survived destruction because it provided a shady resting place in hot weather.

Now, however, its days as a seat were over, the deep-set side posts of locust which supported the roof were dug out together with the old Bitter-sweet, and the whole was carried by a number of men to the garden and reset as an entrance, with a double swinging gate to replace the discarded seat. A few feet away,

at each side, we planted a fine specimen Arbor Vitæ, and balanced the Bitter-sweet with a Clematis paniculata to grow on the opposite post and join it on the roof. Thus the vista of the borders was given a frame, and in opening the gate one felt that one was really "going in" to the garden.

In order to avoid repetition I must ask those who are looking through the gate with me to see my color scheme, to imagine that the two hundred and forty-two feet of double border held some blossom throughout its entire length almost continuously during the four important months I have mentioned, June, July, August and early September. This was assured by the use of certain "stand-bys,"—white Narcissi planted as an edging all the way and followed later by Sweet Alyssum, then German Iris, Sweet Williams, Foxgloves, Hollyhocks, and Phlox, occurring at frequent intervals and harmonizing with the color schemes of the sections.

Now, having established my picture, I return to the working out of the color arrangement and to the Yuccas at the gate.

1. White.—Yuccas, Narcissi, Iris, Foxgloves, Sweet William, Sweet Alyssum and Phlox.
2. Pale Pink.—Columbines (Aquilegias), Lupines, Garden Heliotrope (Valerian), and pale Hollyhocks.
3. White.—Fraxinella alba, Meadow Rue (Thalictrum polygamum), Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora and Japanese Anemone.
4. Deep Pink.—Sweet Williams, Penstemmons, Phlox Elizabeth Campbell, China Asters and bright pink Hollyhocks.

"The Entrance to the Borders"

5. White.—Nicotiana affinis, Cimicifuga racemosa, Hydrangea, Artemisia lactiflora, and Asters.
6. Pale Yellow and Blue.—Iris flavescens, Iris pallida dalmatica, Aquilegia caerulea and A. chrysantha, pale yellow Marguerites (Anthemis tinctoria Kelwayi), Delphinium Belladonna, Lemon Lily (Hemerocallis flava), pale yellow Hollyhocks and Helianthus Miss Mellish.
7. Deeper Yellow and Deeper Blue.—Deeper yellow Marguerites, perennial yellow Foxgloves (Digitalis grandiflora), False Indigo (Baptisia australis), late Lemon Lilies (Hemerocallis Thunbergi), Eryngium amethystinum, Veronica subsessilis, Globe Thistle (Echinops Ritro), Delphinium hybridum, Heleniums and Monkshood (Aconitum).
8. White.—Bocconia cordata, Hydrangea, Foxgloves and Nicotiana Sylvestris.
9. Deeper Yellow and Orange.—Coreopsis, pale and deep yellow Calendulas, Nasturtiums, Zinnias in orange and copper, Rudebeckia maxima, Asclepias tuberosa (Butterfly weed), Helenium Riverton Gem.
10. White.—Foxgloves, White Hollyhocks, Hydrangea, Asters, Boltonia.
11. White and Pale Lavender.—Yuccas at all four corners of the cross path and large clumps of Physostegia Virginiana alba.

Across the path and on to the woods my effects were almost entirely made by Narcissi, Sweet Williams, Iris, Sweet Alyssum, Hollyhocks and Phlox. In the course of time this became largely a Phlox border and the effect was gorgeous as seen against the background of woods. After the other stand-bys were over the Phloxes blazed in color until the end of September, shading from white to pale pink, deep pink,

crimson, white, salmon and scarlet, and so on in a long range of colors until they reached the woods and here, adopting Miss Jekyll's suggestion, I planted Foxgloves to continue the garden a little way into the woods, and draw the eye on into their cool depths.

The many white sections in the borders were designed to separate, and at the same time reconcile, the sections of color. As they invariably included tall-growing shrubs or plants with much foliage, such as Hydrangeas, Artemisia lactiflora and Bocconia cordata, they achieved this object and also gave balance and strength by their bold grouping. There were similar reliefs of white or pale pinks and lavenders in the further borders among the Phloxes, particularly Peonies, Physostegia and Hydrangeas. Also there were many annuals used as fillers to cover bare spots or to conceal perennials which had finished blooming and grown unsightly.

One suggestion of Miss Jekyll's had a most amusing result in my garden. She mentions in her books several varieties of Verbascum which are not generally known here. The only one with which I was familiar was our common Mullein and as I had always been intrigued by the soft gray velvet of its leaves I determined to plant it among my Delphiniums. Unfortunately the leaves grew ragged and unsightly as the plants spindled up, and the pale yellow flowers refused to do more than to peep out, one at a time. I could see that they were a continual affront to Adam and a source of astonishment to my friends, but I supported them stoutly, though with a sinking heart, un-

til Fate intervened in the shape of a visitor, a vigorous old lady, who proudly announced one morning that she had weeded all the horrid Mulleins out of my garden, though she had sat down several times when they gave way suddenly. I thanked her with perfect sincerity and put Verbascums on the list of "dont's."

My planting list contains nothing rare or difficult, it is almost fool-proof and weather-proof, and it can confidently be recommended for our northern climate. The arrangement proved harmonious and practicable for that puzzling problem the herbaceous border, and is one which a beginner can carry through with success. Care, however, must be taken not to allow self-sown seedlings to come up in the wrong places and thus disrupt the color scheme, and to weed out crude shades and poor flowers.

My difficulty is not so much in discarding, as it is getting rid of the discards, for Adam clings to them as he does to the birds' nests. Rather than dump them upon the rubbish heap he always finds an excuse to heel them in somewhere, and I am frequently astonished by clumps of magenta Phlox or piebald Sweet Williams springing up in the most unexpected places.

Many years ago, when the borders were first ploughed, I bought at a department store sale six Peonies at twenty-five cents apiece! They grew vigorously and bore small single blooms, not unlike tiny Water Lilies. After recovering from my first astonishment that anything really bloomed, I began to feel that the size of the flowers was not in proportion to the room they took up in the borders, but still they

grew and spread. They were difficult to explain to my friend, the Secretary of the Peony Society, in fact it could not be done, and whenever his longed-for visits to my garden coincided with Peony season there was a very thorough "tweaking" and a suspicious bulge in the compost heap. As the Secretary himself grows for perfection of bloom and ruthlessly throws out every plant that fails to come up to his ideal, there is little to arouse his admiration in my garden, which is designed for effect. However, his unfailing kindness and helpful advice have been so valuable that at last, in very shame, I threw out the white Peonies. At least I supposed I had, but I had reckoned without Adam. A year later a long planting of Peony foliage appeared in a rather neglected corner of the border, and I could not account for its presence there. When questioned Adam explained with a singular appropriateness, "Oh, that's that little white Puny." Into my head came the refrain of the old song, "And the cat came back."

The thought of the Secretary brings to mind another incident which dates back to the first year of my borders. At that time when the long beds of low annuals seemed distressingly flat and lacking in background, a neighbor appeared one Sunday afternoon carrying in each hand a most fascinating little White Pine Tree, about eighteen inches high, and forming a round mass of silvery needles. They were a friendly gift dug up as he walked through his fields and, though I was delighted, I was at a loss to know just where to put them on such short notice. He stood ready to plant them for me, so at random I suggested two places just be-

hind the western border, where I imagined them as always being soft fuzzy little things standing about fifteen feet apart. But alas, kittens will not stay kittens, and in a short time the little trees began to make a most amazing growth, one maintaining its rounded shape and the other towering up like a pagoda.

When the border was widened the trees stood just within the edge of the bed and continued to thrive on the enriched soil until finally they dominated that side of the border for some distance and thrust their lovely branches across the path. Ferns and Foxgloves grew in the bed of pine needles beneath them, and Delphiniums growing against them had a perfect background to enhance their beauty.

When I consulted my friend, the Secretary, about these Pines, explaining my fondness for them, he replied quite simply, "Well, I think it is just a question of whether you want to grow flowers or trees in your garden." Was ever anything more succinctly or delightfully put? Of course, I should have ordered Adam out with his axe then and there, though I feel quite sure he would have managed to lose the axe, but, as a matter of fact, the Pines are still there and are, to me at least, the salient feature of my garden. As they grew to interfere in the path I took my courage in my hands and cut out or cut back the lower branches on that side, thus leaving the vista of the whole length of the border clear, yet keeping the form of the tree and enough foliage to act as a background to the tall flowers growing against them.

Opposite the first tree I have planted another White

Pine to balance it on the east side, but well back from the bed. Already the upper branches of the two trees are meeting to form a cavern of coolness for a short distance in the hot path. This is at the top of a slight rise in the walk and one can sit here and enjoy an unrestricted view of the borders in both directions.

The White Pines are now thirty-five feet high and are beginning to show those vertical planes so suggestive of Japan. If they grow to be too dense for the adjacent borders I shall make every concession to them in the form of shade-loving plants, and perhaps when my friend, the Secretary, sits beneath them some hot July day, he, too, will say, "Well, perhaps after all— "

White Pines as a Background

CHAPTER V

Practical Things

In the early days of my garden the asparagus bed lay just at the right as one crossed over from the flower border, and was concealed from the latter by two rows of rose bushes and by a simple trellis over which grew Honeysuckle and Clematis. Therefore, in walking along the cross path and under the arbor one stepped into Adam's domain of vegetables,—yet not entirely his, for at one side was the rose garden.

For many years the asparagus bed and the rose garden were separated only by a narrow grass path, so that Adam's vegetable garden and my flowers reminded me of Mr. and Mrs. Boffin's arrangement in that wonderful Boffin's Bower of "Our Mutual Friend." There, you will remember, Mrs. Boffin was "a high flyer at Fashion," while Mr. Boffin was all for comfort, so they effected a most satisfactory compromise by which one-half of the parlor floor was richly carpeted and furnished for elegant Mrs. B., while the other half was sanded and set forth with a "weal and hammer pie" for her simple Noddy.

The Boffins continued to live in perfect content with this equal division, but in my case the homely world of vegetables was pushed further and further back, until now one must walk through an opening in the ever-

green hedge that bounds the rose garden before one can find Adam really among his own. Here he has taken a firm stand against further encroachments, and eyes with suspicion the increasing number of seed beds and rows of perennials which my ever-expanding flower garden makes necessary.

The first and best investment in our vegetable garden was the asparagus bed. No vegetables bought in the market can compare with one's own, picked fresh and in a perfect condition of ripeness, and this is especially true of asparagus, peas, and corn, all of which lose their flavor over night. I always buy the early market asparagus a few times so that our own will be even more appreciated when it comes; the contrast between the hard gritty bunches in the shops and the great fat, succulent stalks which Adam brings in, is an object lesson.

The making of the bed was rather like digging a cellar, and I was aghast when I saw the extent of the excavation, but it was as good at the end of seventeen years as it had ever been and I never regretted its thorough foundation. The whole space of thirty by fifteen feet was first dug out to the depth of two feet and a thick layer of manure spread at the bottom. This manure was thoroughly dug into the bottom soil, then a foot of the good top soil was spread over the whole, another layer of manure added and worked in, and so on until within eight inches of the top. When the whole excavation had been filled and enriched to this level, ridges were marked out with a garden line, eighteen inches apart, and raised to stand up two

inches. On these ridges the asparagus roots were laid eighteen inches apart each way, the raised earth permitting the roots to be drawn down and spread out at each side. The whole bed was then filled in with good fine soil which was pressed well about the roots leaving each row slightly raised. Every Fall a heavy top dressing of manure is spread over the bed for Winter protection and forked in very lightly in the Spring. A coating of coarse salt is added when the weeds become troublesome and, aside from this, the bed needs no care. Asparagus should not be cut at all the first year after planting as it has not gained its strength, and but very lightly the second, so that one's appetite must really be conserved for the third year when it is richly repaid for the waiting.

Eventually as my rose garden developed I determined to remove the asparagus bed, and to utilize the whole space, surrounded by an Arbor Vitæ hedge, for flowers. It took courage to uproot the old bed after seventeen years of good service, and I did not do so until a second bed had been made and was in full bearing.

When I started this second bed, about seven years ago, it was impossible to get sufficient manure to make it as the first had been made, and for the encouragement of those in the same position I will say that in spite of this it has been most successful. In default of manure Adam used the sod which he took from the top before excavating. This sod was cut into pieces and thrown, with the grass side down, at the bottom of the excavation, a foot of top soil was

added, and then another layer of sod; when the space was filled to within eight inches of the surface a liberal dressing of bone meal was added to the rows and the ridges were hilled up and planted as before. The bed has had a heavy top dressing of manure every Fall and grows magnificent stalks of asparagus, proving that the rotting sod has furnished a good foundation.

The greatest virtue of this delicious vegetable is that it comes early when there are no others in the garden, and that it tides over a long period of dearth. We cut it until the shoots begin to feather out, usually about the first of July, and then more and more sparingly, allowing the stalks to grow up into great feathery fronds, and to remain so until they turn yellow in the Fall, when they are cut down close to the ground and the top dressing of manure applied for the Winter. It is wise to burn these tops as they are apt to harbor beetles and caterpillars. If one wishes to increase the size of one's asparagus bed, but is not in any hurry about it, the cheapest way is to sow the berries as soon as they are ripe, cultivate like any seedlings, and in a few years a new stock of roots will be ready for planting.

Our vegetable garden is a very pleasant place, as a vegetable garden always should be. I usually find that visitors are quite as much interested in it as they are in the flowers, for Adam's indispensable wheel-hoe, with all its varied adjustments, keeps the neat rows in apple-pie order, and grass paths lead conveniently from one part to another.

In planting vegetable seeds it is most important to

sow for a succession of crops, not only buying early and late varieties of seed, but sowing every two weeks to ensure a steady supply until frost. Adam always has ready a quantity of stakes, made when outside work is impossible, and on these he writes the name of each variety and the date of sowing, so that by consulting the markers at the end of each row one can judge how the vegetable is coming on.

We start cauliflowers, cabbage, tomatoes, peppers and lettuce in the hot-bed and transplant as soon as the weather permits. We always grow a few radishes under glass for an early crop.

For many years I tried all sorts of vegetables, and wasted space, time, and effort on things which no member of the family would eat. Squash in several picturesque forms was irresistible on the vine, particularly the white patty-pan variety, but as it went untasted at the table I reluctantly gave it up and now devote garden space only to those vegetables which are really appreciated.

Swiss Chard is useful, as the leaves are edible as greens, and the stalks are very nice cooked like asparagus and served with hollandaise, but it persists almost too long, and sometimes when Adam brings in more "Swedish charge" I could wish it were less prolific. I feel about it somewhat as I did about "greens" when I kept house in England. This useful word seems to cover a multitude of sins, and when on my first marketing trip, having been coached by my cook, I asked for "greens" I was thrown into confusion by the question, "What kind?" I had no idea and said

so, whereupon a wealth of greenery was set before me, —sea kale, beet tops, young cabbage, spinach, and as the auctioneers put it, "other articles too numerous to mention." But whatever I brought back seemed to come to the same thing when cooked, and now on my list of seeds there are few packets that come under the all-embracing word—"greens."

As we all agree on the desirability of asparagus, peas, beans, corn, radishes, lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers, I go in heavily for the different varieties of those vegetables, and devote little space to others.

I have also narrowed down in my choice of peas, finding that too much time was devoted to brushing the tall varieties. I now order "Little Marvel" as a main crop and for succession sowings. It is a delicious pea, very dependable and needing no support. I also get a small amount of some extra-early sort and one other kind, usually "Notts Excelsior," to supplement in case the "Little Marvel" should fail. From these three there is an abundant supply for the table and for canning.

The same is true of our string and wax beans, but the limas are always a gamble. If the frosts hold off and the weather is very propitious we enjoy a few pickings of early bush and pole limas, and usually find the little "Sivas" the earliest of all. A blacksmith in the village gave us some English broad-beans, which I have never seen listed in American seed catalogues. I prefer the striking black and white blossoms to the beans, which are less delicate than our limas. Adam always refers to them as Welsh broad-beans, that be-

ing the blacksmith's nationality, and whatever defects they develop are laid to that fact.

I have not yet discovered any corn to compare with "Golden Bantam," though I always buy an equal amount of "Howling Mob," perhaps only to hear Adam say it. With succession sowings of these two we have corn soup, corn on the cob, corn oysters and fritters, and corn escalloped, stewed and finally bottled in glass jars to repeat the good things through the Winter.

In growing corn we always thin the number of stalks to three or four of the sturdiest to insure stronger growth and better bearing, but last year Adam regretted that he had taken the trouble, as a pair of coons (four-legged) visited the corn for two successive nights, broke off the best stalks and, carrying them away to a convenient dining place, stripped off the ears and ate them up.

Tomato plants are best trained as one stalk and kept well trimmed so that the sun can ripen the fruit. We find them easier to care for in this way, as the plant can be tied to one stake instead of to an elaborate frame or trellis and will bear quite as abundantly. One "dodge" for getting early tomatoes is to dig a hole one foot deep for each plant, fill it with fresh manure to within six inches of the top, and then add rich top soil and set the tomato plant in this as early as practicable. The heat of the manure will act as a sort of hot-bed, and you will astonish your neighbors with the earliness of your crop.

I often think of my early difficulty in getting small

cucumbers for pickling; the large White-spine variety for the table was delicious and prolific, but the small pickling sort, which I planted to get the tiny pickles that I like, never seemed to function properly. At last the mystery was solved,—we had been waiting for one large crop of the proper size to appear all at once, instead of picking them every morning as fast as they developed, and keeping them in brine until a sufficient number had been gathered to pickle. Since then there has been no dearth.

Cabbage and cauliflower do not find our light hot soil quite to their liking and need extra care. We get rid of cabbage worms by sprinkling the plants with coarse salt when the morning dew is on them. If club-root develops in the soil these vegetables must be grown in another part of the garden.

Lettuce is an essential and heads well if transplanted, and besides this I give some space to peppers, Hubbard squash for pies, parsley, New Zealand spinach (which is more heat-resisting than other kinds), chard, beets, carrots, turnips, radishes, onions, and "Small Sugar-Pumpkins" grown among the corn.

As soon as the crop of any one vegetable is over in the Fall and it is too late for a further rotation we sow Winter rye in the cleared and weeded space and, before Winter sets in, the whole vegetable garden is covered with a strong-growing crop which keeps out weeds and is ploughed under in the Spring as green manure. This sort of fertilization is the most efficacious and lasting on light soils, and, with a light dressing of ma-

nure in the Spring, the vegetable garden is kept at a high rate of productiveness.

Opposite the new asparagus bed is the strawberry bed, in which we grow the early and the ever-bearing varieties. The latter sometimes gives us fruit until October, for Adam keeps a supply of coverings for frosty nights. Young strawberry plants are obtained by pegging down the old runners with a stone until they root, when they are cut off and transplanted. We start a new bed in this way every other year, as the berries are fine the first year, smaller but still good the second, and very inferior the third. Very rarely it happens that some catastrophe, such as winter mice or white grubs, destroys our plants so that we must buy a fresh supply, but for the most part the supply of new plants from old beds has been constant and, like the asparagus, the strawberry bed is one of the best investments in the garden.

Potatoes are grown in various parts of the meadow, as one patch or another needs to be ploughed and cultivated for a year or so before seeding back to grass. Grown in new ground in this way they need only a commercial fertilizer, but on a small place I should never recommend them as they take up too much space and time, and can be bought as cheaply as raised.

Every row in this pleasant domain of Adam's is laid out with a garden line, and all is planned out to the last inch. It must, therefore, be particularly trying to have my flowers crowded in wherever there is a breathing space. But what else can be done with

Gladioli bulblets which have not yet reached the blooming size, with perennials which are still on trial for color and desirability, with left-overs from hot-beds, seedlings raised out of doors and, last and most important of all, with Sweet Peas?

Imbued with the idea that it is essential that Sweet Peas should never be sown twice in the same soil, I have conscientiously moved the poor dears about from pillar to post every year, but they are now occupying a permanent place in a row eighty feet long across the centre of the vegetable garden. Here posts of iron piping, painted green, stand ten feet apart with wire netting stretched between and a climbing rose planted at each post.

The problem of the soil is solved by putting new earth in the trench every year. It is dug deep, well enriched with manure, and filled to within five inches of the surface; the seeds are planted deep and as the little plants grow the dirt is filled in around them until it is within one inch of the top, it is then left at this lower level so as to collect as much moisture as possible. The vines, being deep rooted, withstand the heat and drought of midsummer, and are further assisted by an occasional thorough soaking and a mulch of lawn grass clippings. I buy both Early Forcing and later Spencer varieties so as to have two crops of flowers, and I sometimes wonder, in the early evening when I gather them, why I ever planted so many. They must be picked daily and never allowed to make seed and the task is no light one. I set them in great bowls or buckets in a cool place at night, and arrange them

in color schemes in the morning when each flower has revived and stands up poised on tip-toe.

But I see I am back at my flowers and this is a chapter of practical things. What is more practical and more uninteresting than the proper care of garden implements, and what more necessary?

To an unsystematic gardener like myself, it is sheer torture, after hours of hard work, to scrape and clean my trowel or hoe and put it exactly where it belongs. But I know from sad experience what are the results of neglect upon the keenness and effectiveness of those implements, and how much time can be lost in looking for them. There is no more maddening aphorism than "A place for everything and everything in its place," yet if it is constantly carried out (by someone else) it makes life run very smoothly. Adam lives up to this good maxim and our barn is, therefore, a neat and orderly place.

My knowledge of country barns is large and varied, and I think some day I shall write on "Wild Barns I Have Known," with apologies to Mr. Thompson Seton.

During the last year of the war I was asked to cover the township in a government campaign to induce farmers to raise winter wheat and rye, a difficult task in a dairy country which is unsuited climatically to both crops. As the farmer is always to be found in his barn, if he is not "down in the lot," I had many opportunities to look into these buildings.

I remember particularly one enormous barn where I hunted about for some time, calling in vain for the

owner, until I heard a faint halloo in the distance and traced it to the great round silo.

Here in the dim light I found my man and stated the government request. His only reply was to look up into the great hollow tunnel stretching up above us and ask:

"Lady, do you see that hole up there?"

"I see it."

"Well, lady, that hole has got to be filled with corn, corn, corn."

I saw his point and left him without any further argument, and as I went he was still repeating meditatively, "corn, corn, corn."

But of all the wild barns I have known the most amazing was on a farm where I went to an auction, and as it was the very best auction I have ever attended (I have rather a weakness for them), and as I bought a patchwork quilt which figures later in my story, I must be allowed to describe it.

A dear friend with kindred enthusiasms went with me on that eventful day, and we started our long drive early so as not to miss the sale of fine old furniture which we had previously examined at the house. Later experience has taught me that early starts are futile on such occasions as all the undesirable things must be got rid of first, but as we were on the spot we followed the sale closely from nine o'clock in the morning until six o'clock at night. The contents of a stable, a huge cow barn, a chicken house and another barn, as well as a large wood-shed, all packed full of the accumulations of years and years, had to be cleared out

The Borders in June

(See page 134)

and sold before the house itself was reached. Such tools as hoes, rakes, pitchforks, spades, shovels, etc., etc., came not in single spies, but in battalions. The farm had been in the hands of the same family for many generations, a most unusual thing in this country, and apparently nothing in all those years had been thrown away, yet every article found a ready purchaser, and not one bit of old chain, or one box of rusty nails was left behind as the auctioneer winnowed his way through the endless accumulations.

At lunch time six barrels were disclosed on the lawn and everyone was invited to "pitch in." We were only too ready and pitched in to draw forth paper bags in each of which was discovered two hearty ham sandwiches, one hard-boiled egg, two doughnuts and a piece of cheese. As every farmer for miles around was there with his entire family the six barrelfuls were none too many, and nothing before or since has ever tasted quite so good.

In the afternoon the house was reached, and here a most amazing transformation met our eyes. On a previous visit we had been shown about by the heiress to the place, an elderly lady swathed to the chin in an "all-over" apron, with a pillow case pinned tightly over her head framing a long sallow face. She had been away from the farm for many years and had returned to it wearing an air of mystery and with the delightfully exciting reputation of being a "lady detective." Whether this was truth or fiction I do not know but the pillow case and apron were certainly an impenetrable disguise, for on the day of the auc-

tion the lady blossomed into quite a different and hardly recognizable person. She was regal in a black bengaline silk (the sort that stands alone), enhanced by an elaborate trimming of jet bugles which tinkled and shone like the girandoles in the front parlor. Long black gloves increased the funereal impression and the whole was topped by an enormous "crown roast" of black puffs and curls which surely never could have been concealed beneath the pillow case. A face as dead white as powder could make it, and the assumption of an immobile and silent position in the front hall, completed a most terrifying effect, with the result that all of us, blundering gaily into the doorway from the bright sunshine outside, were suddenly stricken into silence. Later a farmer's wife on the creaking chair at my side summed it up for all of us when she whispered, "It's just like a funeral with the corpse walking around."

However, the auction continued with unabated zest, and in the wood-shed forty cords of wood, twenty dozen jars of jellies and preserves, and pounds and pounds of home-made soap were sold at good prices. The soap was much harder than the fire-wood, and as for the preserves and jellies—when one buyer timidly asked the Lady Detective if she thought they were really good the latter replied with the most convincing scorn, "Certainly, they are all of seven years old." One small room called by the L. D. "the den," was almost entirely furnished with sofa cushions, referred to by the auctioneer as "the most remarkable collection of sofa pillows in this part of the country or any

other, and, ladies, here's your chance." The L. D. added that there were thirty-five of them, and no two alike. Here my friend was overcome by slight hysteria and rushed to the open air, but I remained to examine details and to get more intimate family history of how and by whom each cushion was made.

Unfortunately my memory is dim as to some of the thirty-five varieties but I do recall one made of cigar ribbons, one of patchwork bits put together with every stitch known to needleworkers, and one hand painted with the portrait of a girl (perhaps the L. D. in youth) and covered with thin gauze through which she peered spectrally.

This auction stands out in my memory as the one at which I did not get what I most wanted. Isn't it regrettable but true, that the one thing missed, whether it be a hat seen fleetingly in a shop window in San Francisco, or an old tea-chest in Hong-Kong, far outweighs in desirability the purchases and bargains actually secured?

Nevertheless, as we drove home that night, we were loaded down with spoils; our feet were buried in a welter of home-made soap about which my friend enquired "Do you think it will ever dissolve?" and I answered, "Never." Over our knees was an old cradle, neither of us having any children young enough to put in it, and behind us rose a barrier of chairs, brass kettles, a feather bed, and my patchwork quilt—but that is another story.

CHAPTER VI

The Rose-Garden

My Rose-garden is entered through an arbor covered with Climbing Roses and Clematis which, on hot days, is a delightfully shaded nook for reading or sewing. The garden enclosure itself is provided with comfortable chairs and is warm and sheltered when the weather is cool. Altogether a very charming refuge during the long Summer days.

It has passed through many phases and I should hesitate to let a real Rose grower look into it at all for it is a curious fact that, whereas I feel confident of steady improvement in the borders and in the development of the place as a whole, I am not at all sure that my Roses were not better at the start than they are now. I am speaking of the quality of the blooms, not of the Rose-garden itself, nor of the number of bushes, of which I now have far more. Perhaps the cause of the trouble lies in the increased number, for Roses produce in exact ratio to the amount of care bestowed upon them. When there were but two rows of bushes, set in a long narrow bed to shut off the view of the vegetable garden from the border walk, I had something that was not too extensive or too elaborate to receive the maximum of care. I could spray every leaf and hand-pick every insect pest with-

out fatigue, and moreover the rest of the garden was simple and small enough to leave plenty of time to concentrate on the Roses. Concentration and devotion are necessary to obtain fine Roses, and how amply they repay only a true Rose-lover knows. I believe that the greatest rosarians have been those to whom other flowers have meant comparatively little, and that this is truer of the Rose-grower than it is of one who devotes himself to Iris or Peonies, or to any of those other flowers which attract specialization.

It is far from my purpose to discourage anyone from growing Roses, but I urge the point that it is a mistake to grow one more bush than can be properly cared for. Peonies, Iris, and the majority of perennials, will persist and make a fairly good showing in spite of neglect, but Roses demand constant attention.

It sounds like an easy matter to keep within limitations in ordering Roses, but indeed it is not. There are so many lovely varieties that it is difficult to choose a few, and the beginner is apt to get too many different sorts, with the result that his beds are spotty and lack effect. The lists of favorite Roses published by The American Rose Society are very helpful, and two valuable books are The Rose in America, by J. Horace McFarland, and The Practical Book of Outdoor Rose Growing, by George C. Thomas, Jr.

But after all there is one sensible way to go about the planning of a Rose-garden, and that is to decide beforehand what one is really growing Roses for. If it is merely for the cut flowers the problem is reduced to a minimum. The bushes can be planted in rows wher-

ever there is a spot combining sunshine and protection from high winds, and where a mellow rich soil can be prepared for them. The matter of effect is of no importance, and the quality of bloom and stalk and foliage are all that matter. This was where I scored in my first attempt, for I aimed at these alone and secured very creditable Roses in spite of every disadvantage in the matter of soil, climate and insect pests.

A bowl full of exquisite Roses with glossy unblemished foliage and sturdy stems compensates for all the work of growing them, particularly as the work is fascinating in itself, else why are the libraries filled with books by literary and artistic persons whose hobby it has been? If I had stopped with the propagation of Roses for bloom alone, my knowledge of the subject would be far more thorough. But I am telling of the evolution of my own little patch, and truth compels me to admit that I did not stop there, and that the development in this case has been like the career of many men, "biggest at the little end." However, the working out of personal problems is sometimes suggestive and interesting to other amateurs, and I confess that I feel a certain pride in having persisted in Rose growing at all under our adverse conditions. When I think of the profusion and luxuriance of Roses in California, and on the Pacific Slopes of the Northwest, I feel that those of us who are not in the proper Rose areas deserve full marks for our efforts.

Anyone whose chief gardening interest is an herbaceous border cannot afford to be a specialist in any

one flower. I find that I am already "spread too thin" to keep up intelligently with all the flowers, shrubs and trees that I would like to grow well. It would be sheer audacity for me to attempt to advise on that highly specialized and much written-about subject, the cultivation of the Rose, but I may be able to give suggestions that would be helpful in planning a Rose-garden, perhaps most of all through my own mistakes. I have enjoyed my experiments with the problem so thoroughly that I would like to assist others to work it out for themselves without professional advice.

In the matter of making a successful Rose-garden I would suggest three alternatives, all of which I have tried on a small scale, and the first of which we have already discussed.

1. A Rose-garden for cut flowers, and aiming only at perfection of bloom.

2. A formal Rose-garden designed for effect, and containing architectural features such as arches, trellis, etc.

3. A Rose-garden designed for effect and dependent upon other flowers to supplement its bloom.

Roses demand so much well tilled space and so much ventilation about them that one must give them areas all to themselves, and the difficulty is to make them look attractive, rather than sparse leggy things dotted over a stretch of bare earth. The answer to this difficulty given by plan "2" is to lay out the space in beds of geometrical shape with formal edging of some sort, and neat paths to accentuate the design. There may also be arbors or arches of Climbing Roses, and garden

features, such as a sundial, a fountain, a summer house, pergola or statuary. Thus even when the garden is not in full luxuriance there is an interest and architectural value in its design. A very famous example of this type is the Rose-garden in the Elizabeth Park, at Hartford, Conn., and it is well worth a long trip to see this beautiful and suggestive garden in bloom. The study of such a rosarium is worth more than much theoretical knowledge from books.

This plan "2" needs careful thought and study to be successfully carried out. It can be as simple or as expensive as the owner wishes, but no amount of architectural decoration will compensate for poor blooms or bad arrangement. It seems best always to plant Teas and Hybrid Teas in beds together, and to put Hybrid Perpetuals by themselves; the two sorts do not grow or look well together. Polyantha Roses are good for the outside planting of beds as they bloom almost continuously and, being low, conceal the legginess of the larger bushes. Climbing Roses have been so improved in beauty and hardiness that they are useful to grow over surrounding walls, fences, or trellises, over arches to frame a vista, or trained as pillars and used as accents. Rugosa and similar large-growing sorts are best left in the shrubbery or as hedges.

Such a plan "2" Rose-garden should, I think, be placed apart, and not form an integral part of the main garden. It may be quite close so that one can step through a hedge or an entrance feature and find one's self in the Rose-garden, but it should not be con-

stantly in the public eye, so to speak. There are too many months of bare beds and bushes mounded or strawed to make it always a thing of beauty. It has its decided ups and downs, and during the latter period it should be as unobtrusive as possible.

It was a very lovely Rose-garden in Maine that first made me discontented with my own arrangement. I saw it in full bloom but it was so skillfully concealed by high hedges and trees that had I not been taken to it I would not have been conscious of its existence, though it was but a short distance from the house. The design was exceedingly clever and charming but so conformed to the slope of the land and the already existing trees that it had no suggestion of artificiality. It was in the shape of a partially open Japanese fan with a raised terrace in the handle shaded by low-spreading old apple trees. Here we sat in willow chairs and looked over the Rose beds which radiated outward like the ribs of a fan. Around all three sides was a stone wall, and seen beyond was the blue of the sea. An enclosure of some sort is necessary, not only to shut the garden in by itself, but also to give the Roses the background which they so very much need. Therefore, plan for your hedge, fence, or wall from the first. I then and there determined that no Rose-garden was worth the name without some design to give it form and cohesion, and bitten with this idea I returned to my own simple rows with a most critical eye.

It was soon after this that, as I lay convalescing from an illness, I idly traced with my finger the stripes

of the same patch-work quilt which had been part of my loot from the all-day auction. It was a fresh, neat-looking quilt that had apparently been put away immediately after completion. Its blue and brown figured calico sprigged with roses formed a pleasing pattern on the white background, the whole being quilted with the tiniest of stitches. Here was a central meeting place, a sort of cross-roads, and from it my finger slipped along first one path and then another raying out from it. Why, so it was like paths, and this centre where they started was the very spot for a sundial, the triangular spaces in between must be—they were —Rose beds. The design seemed to leap out from the background as though intended for my Rose-garden alone and my convalescence was hastened from that very hour.

I planned that the paler shades should stand in the outer beds, and the deep pinks and reds in the middle, and the whole was to be surrounded by a low Arbor Vitæ hedge, except on the side toward the border which was to remain open and framed by the trellis and climbing Honeysuckles, so as to give glimpses of one garden from the other, but only glimpses. The design was ultimately carried out in rather a simplification of the quilt pattern.

My original two rows of Hybrid Perpetual Roses were left where they were for they had made such sturdy growth and were of such vigorous varieties that they formed a hedge in themselves, and they did not come into the area of the new beds. The latter were dug two feet deep and well enriched with cow manure,

the paths were laid out in sod, and new Rose bushes planted. In the centre, and just in line with the arbor, we placed an old mill-stone which had been lying for years on the site of a ruined mill near by and had gained a weathered complexion and much moss. On this we built a small concrete base for a lead figure which upholds a sundial. The sundial had been given to me several years before and I had been waiting to find the proper setting and a suitable pedestal for it. The lead figure was picked up in an antique shop and seemed exactly suited in size and feeling to the simple little garden.

In this servantless age we probably all know people who are living in houses far too large and too elaborate for their means, to whom the task of keeping things up is an ever pressing burden and anxiety. In a few years I found myself in the same position with regard to the patch-work-quilt Rose-garden, for the triangular shaped beds which made the design proved too difficult. At the points there was scarcely room to plant the bushes properly, and at the broad ends there was too much space and bare earth, thus proving that long narrow plantings are the most satisfactory. Moreover, the quack grass, which largely formed the sod paths, had a distracting habit of running underneath the beds and rendered the task of weeding doubly hard. But worst of all the paths were too narrow to be mowed with a lawn mower, and the task of cutting them with a sickle on hands and knees was too arduous to be done frequently. Hence the failure of my design, and another proof that experience and com-

mon sense are more necessary in gardening than flights of imagination.

Mr. Horace MacFarland says in his book, "The Rose in America," "We must primarily choose places for the Roses rather than Roses for the places." This is one of the truest things ever said about Roses and should be laid to heart by everyone who plans to grow them. Design, location, and arrangement must all be thought out with one purpose paramount, to grow good Roses. I had forgotten this in my enthusiasm for design and had to pay the penalty by abandoning my elaborate patch-work quilt.

My little Rose-garden now settled down to a less romantic but more practical form—an oblong of lawn with the sundial in the centre and and surrounded on all sides by Rose beds and an Arbor Vitæ hedge. It ceased to be a show place, to be visited only when the Roses were in bloom, and became an outdoor living-room where comfortable willow chairs were in frequent use, and where visitors to the borders dropped down for tea and talk.

This pleasant metamorphosis brought with it new problems. If the well secluded little garden was suddenly to be brought into the limelight, what was to be done about the long periods before and after Rose season? In more favored localities the flowering period might have been prolonged by the use of Tea Roses and Hybrid Teas, but it is so difficult to bring these safely through our severe Winters that we depend largely upon the hardy Hybrid Perpetuals, which rejoice in that name without being perpetually in bloom.

My first attempt to overcome the difficulty was to plant cover crops of flowers such as Violas and Portulaca underneath the Rose bushes, but I soon decided that anything which interfered with the frequent cultivation and enrichment of the soil directly around the bushes was more of a nuisance than an adornment. Edgings of Pansies, Forget-me-nots, and English Daisies were tried with more success, and gradually the arrangement developed into the third type of Rose-garden which is dependent upon other flowers to supplement its bloom. This third phase has been in existence for several years and has proved most satisfactory, giving us a well furnished living-room from May until October, which is as long as one would care to sit out of doors in this climate.

The beds about the oblong lawn have been made wide enough to allow the Roses to be planted in a double row, with plenty of air and space about them. Behind them Delphiniums are planted three feet apart, and their loveliness combined with Roses against the Arbor Vitæ hedge is irresistible.

In front of the Roses a row of stepping stones is set throughout the beds so as to make it possible to work among the bushes without treading down the mellow soil, and between the stones we have tucked in Spring bulbs and flowers—Chionodoxas, Forget-me-nots, and Snowflakes. Next the stepping stones is a row of my finest varieties of Peonies set four feet apart, and well in front of these are Iris,—Pumilla, the early dwarf Iris, as an edging, and large clumps of German, Siberian, and Spanish Iris for succession of bloom.

One long bed has Gladioli instead of Roses to give us late flowers, and another has been so much admired that I will give the planting arrangement in detail. As an edging I have used Inglescomb Yellow Tulips blossoming among Forget-me-not "Royal Blue." Behind this are very tall Iris in lovely shades of blue; I. pallida dalmatica, I. speciosa, and I. Albert Victor, and with these Iris Shekinah, a beautiful yellow pallida. Behind these again are seven good Peonies, early enough to elude the rosebugs,—they are Duchesse de Nemours, Festiva Maxima, Octavia Demay, James Kelway, Eugénie Verdier, M. Jules Elie and Thérèse. At the rear are Belladonna Delphiniums and alternating with them are Speciosum rubrum and album Lilies, which carry on the bloom through September.

There is a burst of Rose bloom from the middle of June through July, and by taking care to cut the Roses with a clean, slanting cut just above an eye from which we want new growth to start, we have a few good blossoms throughout late August, and on until frost. When Roses are scarce or rosebugs are devastating, I am glad that there are other flowers to distract the eye.

I can imagine the exclamation of a Rose specialist at this description, "But why call it a Rose garden, why not Peony, or Iris, or just plain garden?" I can only answer frankly that I garden for effect, and that it always has been "The Rose Garden," and that if it is possible to combine good Roses with other flowers I can see no reason why it should not be done.

For such an outdoor living-room painted iron chairs and table are most practical as they last forever and

Siberian Iris

can be left out with impunity. Cushions covered with colored oil cloth can be added for comfort. Chinese wicker furniture has the advantage that its round bases do not cut into the turf, and that it can be moved about easily. The heavier types of rustic furniture are more appropriate for the wild-garden or the woods. Well-designed wooden furniture is always effective if care is taken not to get too bulky a design for the surroundings, and a good local carpenter can often follow a picture and make seats, trellises, etc., at half the cost of the ready-made article.

The most diverting feature of any garden is a bird's bath, if it be only a shallow, yellow baking dish set in the grass. All sorts of birds in the neighborhood will come to it sooner or later, and to sit quietly near by and watch their exuberant delight is a source of never ending amusement.

From my arbor seat I look in one direction over my little lead figure upholding the sundial and between two tall Arbor Vitæ, which mark the opening in the hedge, to a luxuriant American Pillar Rose which clambers over the Sweet Pea trellis opposite. In the other direction I have a view along the border cross-path to the bird's bath and its frequent visitors. It is hollowed out of a single piece of limestone about five feet long and two wide, and was found in the ruins of a farm house that had burned down many years ago. It was evidently intended to catch the overflow from a rain pipe and it is so shallow and shelving inside that it is perfectly suited to its present purpose. It is raised up a little on flat stones to give the birds

a view of possible cats, and is planted about with Narcissus, Iris, and Tulips. In the middle is a little island of sod planted with wild Forget-me-nots.

There is one season in the Rose-garden when we need such diverting features to take our minds off our troubles. This is rosebug time, when our poor bushes are dripping with sprays or, in some cases, are shrouded with mosquito netting. As to this problem in Rose growing, in which my experience has been most exhaustive, I must confess I have found no adequate solution. The wretched creatures come up in hordes from the sandy soil which is so well suited to their hibernation as larvæ, and as soon as they emerge they settle, not only upon the Roses, particularly the lighter colors, but upon leaves of Hollyhocks, Hydrangeas and Virburnums, the blooms of Iris and Peonies, and indeed upon everything that is succulent and edible. They hang in serried ranks on the leaves of basswood trees and upon the Daisies in the fields. In the phraseology of whooping-cough they are three weeks coming and three weeks going, and during the month or so of their major activity it is a constant struggle to preserve anything from their insatiable maws. We find a solution of soap flakes, bought by weight, a helpful and cheap spray, but any sprays must be applied constantly, and if poisons are used by the time enough has been eaten to be efficaceous the bush and Roses are hardly worth the name. Dr. Hesse's Louse Powder is evidently offensive to the rosebug nostril and tends to keep them from alighting. It acts as a very efficaceous warning to "move on," but I cannot say that it

adds to the beauty of the garden. Hand picking into a can of kerosene and water is the surest way to decrease the pest. My friends complain that I always plan their visits for the rosebug season and keep them eternally busy with a kerosene can. However undeserved this insinuation may be, I must admit to a willingness, at this time, to stoop to any measures.

I fear that my garden has attracted and propagated far more of these pests than there were in the early years of our residence. At that time a very charming old gentleman, who was exceedingly upset by their ever-increasing inroads, determined to make a study of the matter to discover the causes and remedies. He sat in the garden quite motionless all one morning, watching the beetles as they flew over and settled, and at last came to assure me that he had found the solution. "I have found their trysting-place," he declared, his cheeks quite pink with excitement, "all that you need to do is to destroy them there." The years have rolled on and in spite of annihilation at the trysting-place the pest continues to devastate my garden. I hope I shall live to see the day when some rosebug parasite, quite harmless to all but its victim, may be discovered and let loose among my flowers. I shall welcome it.

CHAPTER VII

Suitability

As we think of the dignity of the early Colonial houses of New England, and the spacious elegance of the same period of Southern architecture with its box-bordered gardens, we realize that since that time we have passed through an era of bad taste in both houses and gardens. From this interregnum of the commonplace we are groping our way toward what is gracious and beautiful, but in the reaction against the ugliness of the past we often swing too far toward the fantastic or the merely unusual, forgetting in our enthusiasm that the foundation of good taste is suitability.

However, we are being educated by our mistakes, and as we build better houses we learn to plan better surroundings for them. One symptom of this improvement is evident in our increasing knowledge of the value of shrubs and of their proper arrangement. We are using them more and more as screens or background, or to secure privacy from the street, and one only wishes that there was a little more variety in the choice. The Japanese Barberry, for instance, has proved such a dependable shrub in all seasons that it is now suffering from over popularity, though in cities the fact that every stray scrap of paper lodges among its thorny branches should give people pause.

Many years ago I planted a shrubbery along the driveway which leads round the house. It starts at the top of the knoll on which the house stands and follows the road down hill to the level, where it branches off and extends on farther toward the entrance to the flower borders. It is, in fact, intended to emphasize the idea of a pleasant walk from front door to woods and river.

As I was extremely inexperienced when I planted this shrubbery I made several mistakes. It was laid out in large beds with narrow grass paths between to allow passage through, and to render care and cultivation easier. In each bed were planted tall shrubs at the back and lower ones in front.

So far so good,—but my mistake was to put too many different kinds in each bed, so that instead of long plantings of each sort I had first a Lilac, then a Philadelphus, then a Honeysuckle, and so on. The whole shrubbery lost in effect and became a collection of specimens.

I feel, almost, that I have spoken unkindly of an old friend for the shrubbery has grown splendidly and is often admired, but I know its defects and have learned much from them. With shrubs as with flowers one must plan for broad effects and large groupings.

Among the large number of varieties planted I soon found out which were hardy in our locality, and which "winter-killed" or were set back too much to form blossoms or attain any size,—a valuable but expensive lesson. In ordering my imagination had flown far

among the enticing pages of the nursery catalogues, attracted by glowing descriptions of bloom, berries or Autumn coloring, and quite unconscious of the limitations of latitude and longitude. Moreover I was emboldened by a sum in hand to be expended on this shrubbery, and I failed to realize that a part of it might better have been held back for proper preparation and enrichment of the beds.

However, "Live and learn" is still as true as trite, and though several tender varieties failed to survive the first two Winters, the space they had occupied was soon filled by the growing bushes. One has to plant thickly at first and transplant as soon as the shrubs get crowded, unless, as in this case, Nature does the thinning.

Among those that lived and have proved invaluable are the following old favorites,—Tartarian Honeysuckle in pale and deep pink, Morrow's Honeysuckle in creamy yellow, many fine named varieties of Lilacs, Syringa villosa (a late blooming Lilac), Philadelphus coronarius (locally known as "Syringa"), P. grandiflora, P. Le Moynei hybrids, and Highbush Cranberry (Viburnum opulus). All these are now ten and twelve feet high, and for medium and low growth there are Briar Roses, European, Purple-Leaved and Japanese Barberry, and Spirea Van Houttei.

In front of these I grow Darwin Tulips, and at the back Narcissus Poeticus and Parrot Tulips. The edge of a shrubbery is an ideal place for Spring bulbs of all sorts. They are not then occupying space which is needed later on for other planting effects, and they

The Old Shrubbery

have the inestimable advantage of background. Among the bulbs may be planted Forget-me-nots, Primroses, Phlox sublata, or any low-growing shallow-rooted plants which blossom at the same time, and it is fascinating to endeavor to select a companion flower which contrasts or harmonizes with the colors of the flowering bulbs.

A shrubbery when once established is a joy, for with some thought in planning it can be made to show flower, or berry, or bright Autumn coloring throughout many months. It needs little care beyond one weeding and shallow cultivation of the soil during the season. As my old shrub beds lie on the side of a hill the earth about the roots is inclined to wash away, necessitating an occasional top-dressing of good dirt, and this is advisable in most shrubberies, once in four or five years, for the mere pulling of weeds and forking out of grass removes a certain amount of top soil.

As for pruning,—there are as many theories about it as there are reckless executioners of those theories. I use the word "executioners" advisedly for my shrubs have suffered everything at their hands, and beheadings have been quite as frequent as lopping off of limbs and features.

My own advice on this point is to leave the shrubs alone to grow their own natural, graceful way, avoiding over-crowding, and cutting out only dead wood, Beyond this it is unsafe to go, unless one can employ someone who not only knows the habits and peculiarities of every shrub, but loves them and is imbued

with the desire to keep them in their natural state. It is heart-breaking to see lovely, drooping branches trimmed up like a shaving-brush, or cut straight across like Barbarossa's beard. Yet all these things are possible to a man with clippers in his hand, a very fury of destruction seems to descend upon him, and he continues to lop off branches in an effort to make one side similar to another, until there is little of the original left. Every shrub has its own habit of growth, some forming blossoms on the old wood and some on the new, and unless this is understood pruning should not be attempted.

One year when some of my finest shrubs had suffered "topiary work" at the hands of a so-called expert, the same old gentleman who had discovered the "trysting-place" of the rose-bugs cried out with flashing eyes at the sight of the destruction, "Saracen, Saracen"!

Shrubs are used not only as ornamental features, and to screen off unsightly objects, but also to define the outline of property, in which case they become a hedge. I must confess that I am very glad to see the old American fondness for an open lawn without demarcation lines of any sort, changing into a predilection for hedges, fences, and even walls, in other words into a sense of the value of privacy. Enclosure of some sort is as necessary for the boundary of the whole place as for the little intimate garden, and it is essential in the open country where stray cattle are always on the lookout for well-tended grass and vegetables.

The problem of enclosing our place was a difficult

one for it had a long frontage on two roads, and no fences.

Between us and our neighbors we built ordinary wire fences, and in front of these we allowed the natural hedge-row to grow up. It is astonishing to see how lovely the result has been,—on one boundary line the hedge is a broad mass of Sumach which becomes a sheet of scarlet and crimson in Autumn, and on another it is a barrier of tall Wild Cherries, Mountain Ash, Locusts and Elms, with low-growing shrubs, Golden Rod, Asters, and other wild flowers in front. Farmers always keep these hedge-rows cut to prevent their encroachment on the fields, and to discourage "weeds" and field mice, but if one can afford to let them grow they develop all sorts of delightful surprises.

As an enclosure on the road it was decided to have a hedge of English Hawthorn, but fortunately, as it turned out, only the section in front of the house was planted. This choice was inspired by an old English nursery-man who, undoubtedly, had visions of the "Flowering May" in the "Old Country." The experiment was given more than a fair trial, for Adam expended upon it much time and labor that could ill be spared from the garden. The Hawthorn had deep rich soil, frequent cultivation, and watering, but in spite of all this it was a most disappointing failure as a hedge, and after years of replanting and expense it was transplanted into the natural hedge-row, where it does fairly well grown as a small tree. Adam was disgusted and I think that in this failure he felt his national traditions and customs crumbling beneath an alien sky.

The lesson was brought home that no planting material, however rare or beautiful, can be of any value if it is wholly unsuited to the soil and climate. A thin line of sparse stalks cannot make a hedge, nor can a collection of rare shrubs which "winter-kill" to the ground make a shrubbery. If there is a nursery near enough to have similar climatic conditions it is helpful to go to see their planting material and find out what is hardy and luxuriant in growth.

By the time the Hawthorn had proved its inability to cope with our conditions, the influences of the State of Maine had again entered in, and a new solution of the fencing problem, which was practicable for the whole road frontage, was suggested. All those who know the coast of Maine are familiar with its splendid stone walls, often three feet thick, built of great flat "rawks," as the natives call them, which form the shore. It was these dry-laid walls which spurred me to emulation, but it was a different matter to work with the round cobbles and stones of all shapes and sizes which our locality produced, particularly as they had to be gathered from the fields in all directions and were very scarce at that.

One farmer who had been working laboriously for years to clear his particularly stony lands, allowed my men to pick and cart away several loads before he informed them that he would charge five dollars a load. The rage that this evoked scared him, I think, more than the threat to cart the stones all back and dump them again, at all events the bill was never sent.

It was during Adam's absence in England that the

wall was built, and it was made possible by the fact that the temporary incumbent knew how to lay dry stone walls. He could also play the French horn and evidently considered it his major accomplishment. I was sometimes reminded of a lady who engaged a Norwegian servant as a cook, and tried her at all the household tasks in succession with equally hopeless results, until at last, in desperation, she exclaimed, "Olga, what *did* you do at home?" Whereupon the incompetent proudly replied, "I was the champion skier of Norway."

My musician justified his existence by the fact that he laid twelve hundred feet of stone wall almost unaided. It stands as a real achievement to offset the memory of his practicing on the French horn, and has added immeasurably to the appearance and the dignity of the place. It is a trifle thin in spots owing to the scarcity of material and on one occasion when a vigorous party of Boy Scouts sat on the top of it a whole section gave way and precipitated them into the shrubbery.

This sort of low wall, built of local material, and covered at intervals with Virginia Creeper and Bittersweet, is appropriate to the character of the place, and avoids the unfortunate mistake so often made of an enclosure far too ornate and formal for what it encloses.

I saw recently two colossal pillars built of rubble and crowned with glass balls erected to form the entrance to a modest bungalow, which again boasted a heavy verandah of the same stone and containing tons of

masonry, on which the little frame dwelling hung like an after-thought.

If a house is of a simple type, it is far better to use a picket fence, or mere posts and wire with creepers growing over them, than to throw the whole effect out of harmony by an enclosure which is entirely out of keeping.

All along our stone wall is a row of magnificent elms and maples about which I often wonder who planted them and when, and did he have a vision of the future like Johnnie Appleseed, or were they too, a part of a natural hedge-row which like Topsy, "just growed?"

I shall never know but I like to think that it was the work of the Unitarian clergyman who built the house about one hundred and fifty years ago. He was the first of his faith to come to this part of the country, and probably traveled by ox-team from New England. He pieced out his stipend by building and running a little saw mill on the river, and that is all I know of him. I have a fine old blue and white platter that belonged to him, and a little three-legged iron pot with a long handle. The latter was brought to me by a woman eighty-four years old, who walked several miles to give it to me because, she said, she remembered it in the parsonage. From these bits I build up the picture of a cultured old New Englander with the vision to plant trees and to save the bit of woodland from his own saw mill.

They are all trees that are not only hardy but luxuriant in growth here, and that is as important in trees as it is in shrubs, as I have learned to my cost.

I passed through a phase of attempting to grow all sorts of tender and unusual trees because it seemed so desirable to introduce new varieties into the locality. Any farmer could have told me what sort of apple would do well here, but I preferred to use my own judgment, which was based on theory, and ordered fifty dwarf apple trees which were planted in a sheltered spot and took years in dying. This was my first and most expensive lesson, but there were also peach trees which required a complete covering in Winter and in general a mother's care, and did not get it.

Spanish Chestnuts died young and without any painful lingering. American Chestnuts were tried both as nursery trees and grown from nuts. The former made a shrub-like growth from suckers, but the main stem apparently could not survive our Winters. The trees grown from the planted nuts show more promise, but the best of them came to a sad end. An old gentleman, who loves to make a yearly custom of any excursion which he has once enjoyed, had made it a habit to visit my garden at a certain date every summer and then to walk through the woods. The promising young chestnut caught his eye as a helpful prop for this expedition, and it was cut down and shaped into a walking stick before anyone realized what was happening. The inner anguish of that moment cannot be described, but it would have been too cruel to spoil the old gentleman's intense pleasure, so to this day he is unaware that the hope of years was borne away in his hand.

There is no advantage in citing the various trees, and shrubs, and planting material of all sorts which I am unable to grow, for to others they may be the veriest weeds. The only lesson to be learned is that every locality has its limitations which can best be studied and understood by those living on the spot. To ignore them is to waste much time and money and to lose an effect of age and mellowness which is far more desirable than variety or rarity. The latter qualities are delightful and are not to be overlooked, but one must use common sense. Even the most skilled of landscape architects is liable to make mistakes, as a valuable collection of Retinosporas planted about my verandah proved by an untimely death. Since then I have stuck to local material, or that which has been proved to be hardy under similar climatic conditions.

Among the finest specimens of evergreens on the place are some which had been growing on waste land about two miles away, a curious stretch of pure sand left by some glacial action and on which no form of vegetation grows except conifers. Transplanted from this barren spot the pines and spruces have thriven in our soil and seem proof against any hardships.

Again, in trees as in shrubs, one should strive for broad effects. Nothing could be more absurd than an avenue of trees no two of which are alike, yet I have seen even this.

The most glaring instance of bad taste in tree planting that has ever come to my notice is on the estate of a very rich man who has spent a fortune in trees and shrubs. He is evidently imbued with the

ambition to grow every sort, but particularly the exotic and the foreign. As a preliminary most of the fine old trees existing on the place were cut down, and the grounds were ploughed and graded until not even a contour of the land remained to be seen. Then, as if to show that the old incumbents were no loss, great trees of sorts unknown in the locality were set out, at what cost one hardly dares imagine, and the planting has been going on ever since, but always with something different and costly. The result is not a gentleman's country place but an arboretum, most interesting but neither beautiful nor restful.

Every man is entitled to his hobby, but the oddity of this collection is accentuated by the quiet dignity of the place next door, where the price of one of the rare conifers on the arboretum-estate would cover all the expense of planting. Here a little wooded ravine has been left in its natural state with plantings of Scilla, Daffodils, and Grape Hyacinths to increase its loveliness in the Spring, and about the house and the rest of the place are fine elms, beeches, and maples which have been there for many years, and which put to shame the upstart nursery stock next door. Taste has governed the planting of the shrubberies and the garden, and is felt in the grouping and spacing of the whole. The contrast between the two places makes one regret the large sums of money expended to produce such a poor effect.

However, I myself know the lure of tree planting, and can well imagine that it might run to an obsession. I recommend its practice during a wet Spring or Fall,

not only because the trees themselves will have a better chance in a wet season, but also because the thought of them thriving under the downpour reconciles one to a long period of floods.

A friend who planted ten thousand white pine seedlings told me that the Spring they were set out he actually begrudged the pleasant days. He was quite inexperienced with seedling trees and, having ordered them from the State Forestry Department, he made elaborate plans for their reception upon arrival. The city was scoured to obtain large, heavy vans which awaited the train with a veritable army of men. When one small hamper containing the ten thousand trees was hauled off the express truck, my friend said that he simply could not face the situation and melted away.

So far in this story of the development of my country place the growth has been entirely from within, that is without outside advice or plan, but later on, when alterations were made to the house and a new barn built, I enlisted the assistance of a skilled landscape architect to lay out a plan for improving the place as a whole. Under his direction some grading was done about the house which made it seem to fit down upon the knoll instead of perching on the top, much as ladies used to wear their hats in the early years of the present century. This is an engineering feat beyond the ability of an amateur as is also the planning and building of roads, and a new roadway was our next step. Instead of entering very near the house the new drive starts at the corner of the two cross-roads and sweeps in a graceful curve along the inside

The House

of the stone wall, a distance of about three hundred feet, to the front door. Elms and oaks were set along this driveway, and between it and the wall a large curving shrubbery was planted.

Along the stone wall on the western side of the place trees were set out in such a way as to shut off the view of a too obtrusive barn in the distance, and to frame other vistas that were desirable.

So much valuable experience was gathered from this landscape planning and execution that I feel under a great debt of gratitude to the architect. His method of moving big trees, for instance, and of making a lawn was most instructive, but I appreciated above all the planning and vision of the place as a whole, which is for the average amateur the most difficult task.

I sometimes think that if one could study the problem from an air-ship hovering directly overhead it would be immensely simplified, for I am not gifted in seeing things on paper. But in my own experience in the air, the very thin air of Hawaii, I had the sensation of being supported only by the most unsubstantial of shavings, and my interest in the map of turquoise sea and purple coral reef beneath me was not of a nature to inspire concentrated study.

It is in the comprehensive view that the assistance of a really fine landscape architect is invaluable, for he seems to carry the topography of the whole place in his mind, and is able to link up the out-lying features in one all-embracing scheme.

I have a large blue-print which contains many suggestions still unfulfilled, such as a service yard which

shall contain the wood pile and other unornamental necessities. Only this Spring a small orchard has been set out in the spot chosen for it on the plan, and eventually I hope to carry out the other ideas and many more of my own which remain uncharted in anything but my mind. But all these things must be brought about gradually unless one is a Croesus, in which case half the fun of planning, and waiting, and accomplishing is gone.

CHAPTER VIII

Remodeling an Old House

Planning, waiting, accomplishing,—that might well be the descriptive motto of the evolution of my house, for it, too, has had its growth and change.

In the first place the mere fact of buying a house in the country required some courage and a distinct sense of adventure, for my friends brought a perfect battery of argument against it.

"Why do you shut yourself off out there away from everybody? You will get thoroughly sick of it and have the place on your hands."

"Why don't you go to the sea-shore in the Summer and have a complete change?"

"You will never get away from housekeeping if you tie yourself up with a place."

"When your children grow up they will loathe it and want to go somewhere where there is something going on."

That expression "something going on" is vague in phraseology but we all know exactly what it means. It suggests the pursuit of pleasure rather than the attainment of quiet happiness. We have formed the habit of doing and thinking too much *en masse*, and our ideas, like our clothes, are apt to be ready-made,

so that we tend to be diffident about venturing on an independent course.

I confess that I felt a sinking of the heart at the dire forebodings of my friends, but I had already tried two years of country life and was therefore sure enough of my decision to be unmoved. In looking back I can answer all the arguments, and I feel thankful that I was not swept into the current.

It is a comfort to feel that one's family has, perhaps, learned to be independent and has escaped the restless spirit of the modern summer-resort, and that a love of Nature and simple things has evolved without any conscious effort or study.

All this is borne in upon me when I see many of my prophetic friends returning utterly worn out from a so-called vacation at the sea, where they have paid enormous prices for inconvenient, ugly cottages which they would consider utterly impossible at any other place, and where they have been obliged to keep open house for the young people who float in and out from all the summer-resorts within motoring distance.

Last year an exhausted mother remarked in September, "I have run a road-house all summer." Asked why, she replied, "Well, you simply have to do it with a grown-up daughter." As an alternative I offer the suggestion that if one can afford this sort of expensive hospitality, it might be more profitable to try a few months of travel or residence in some other country, and so escape the vicious circle of winter and summer entertaining.

As for the argument that children will hate a home

The Dining Room

(See page 106)

in the country as they grow older, that depends, I believe, upon the way they have been brought up. If through their childhood they have been given a part in the growth and development of the place itself, and if they have been taught to rely on their own resources, rather than to feel that all their good times lie in the nearest city, movie-theatre, or country-club, it will be found that a very deep and lasting affection for the place and the countryside have taken root.

All children, however sophisticated, love the activities of country life,—hay-making; playing in the barn; riding and driving, whether it be a tiny pair of donkeys, a Shetland pony, or a real horse; swimming; making dams in a brook; starting a vegetable garden and selling its produce to one's mother at exhorbitant rates; eating strawberries right from the bed; playing in the autumn leaves; and raising something of one's own, whether it be chickens, puppies, ducks, rabbits or pigs. Add to these occupations simple hospitality, games, visits from real friends, and, above all, gardening, and country life will be found very full for all ages. This love of the place persists and in my own family has become not a matter of childish sentiment but of mature judgment and choice.

Again, the warning that it would be lonely has proved of very little weight. The difficulty has been to prevent surrounding farms from entirely passing into the hands of summer colonists, and to maintain wide spaces and meadows instead of the narrow lots of Suburbia.

Why, then, need I make any plea for country homes?

It is because so many young people are debarred from venturing by the very arguments which fortunately failed to shake my purpose. Others are afraid of the expense, or are looking for a finished place such as one sees pictured in our beautiful magazines of country life. They lack courage and, most of all, imagination. In this locality when we bought our place, and in many others in which farms have not yet been valued at city prices, land is still sold at so much an acre, regardless of the buildings upon it. This is the opportunity for people of small means, for if the site has possibilities, fine trees, good water, and a view, there is hardly a house, however shabby, that cannot be metamorphosed into something comfortable and attractive.

I have in mind a little ramshackle house which had been running down and decaying for years, the walls of which could be seen through without the aid of the broken windows. It stood like an old tramp close to a sandy road, and was for sale for a song. It was one of several old farms to which I took a young couple who were thinking of buying, and at each one the wife clinched the matter by the remark: "Well, if *that's* your idea of a country place——!" They are still wrestling with the summer problem, but another woman with a wider vision bought the little house, moved it back to the shore of the river, employed local carpenters to repair it and add dormer windows and the little architectural changes which gave it convenience and charm, and now has a delightful home at an initial cost that was negligible.

I repeat my former advice to know your neighbor-

hood, or to try renting a year or two before buying, and add to this the suggestion that you employ a good architect to look over the house and test foundations, sills, floors, and chimneys in order to find out how much will have to be spent to make the house safe and habitable.

If the fundamentals of the house are so far gone that large sums must be spent, it may not pay to buy. But if the under-pinnings are sound, or can be made so at a reasonable figure, and the purchase price is within your means, then let the architect draw a plan of the place as you and he would like it to be, putting in all the additions and conveniences and artistic touches, and moving partitions or cutting out objectionable features. Live with this plan in your desk drawer where it will not be so evident as to be a continual reminder of the way you wish things were, nor yet so remote as not to suggest an occasional improvement when the opportunity arises. By this scheme everything you do counts and the whole place grows towards perfection.

With the deplorable abandonment of farms come the opportunities for acquiring country homes. Where it is practicable it is wise to keep a tenant farmer on the place, both for the sake of keeping up the land and also as a source of supply for milk, cream, butter, and eggs.

If this is not possible the use of the land may be rented to a farmer near by, or the larger part of the place may be re-forested at small expense for the benefit of one's children and grandchildren.

Thus by buying a farm one has a country place in

the rough which with improvements and with good planting will increase enormously in value. Out of it may grow the finished estate which one sees pictured, and meanwhile there are happy and healthful summers for the children, and all the delights of making something out of nothing, "of growing two blades of grass where only one had grown before."

The determining factors in the choice of our place were the river, the woods, and the fireplaces. I speak of the latter for they were the only things about the house itself that made a favorable impression, almost the only things left as they had been in the original building. There is one huge chimney running up through the middle of the house with a fireplace in the little sitting room downstairs, and another in the bedroom above, and a very large fireplace in the dining room. The curious feature of all these is that they are very shallow in depth, only ten inches, and yet they draw perfectly and, of course, throw a tremendous heat out into the room. They all are fitted for cranes, and in the dining room the original pot-hooks and kettles are there, and in the sitting room the little squat andirons which had evidently been forged for it. The mantels are old and well proportioned, and next the one in the sitting-room is a little narrow cupboard let into the wall and reaching from floor to ceiling. When we first took the house there was also a splendid chimney running up through the large front room but, alas for "modern improvements!" the mantel here had been faced with light green bathroom tiling and the hearth, which in the other rooms had been built of old

square brick tiles, had been re-made of the same slippery material as the facing.

There were other flights of fancy such as plush "cosy corners," and a highly varnished modern staircase the peculiarity of which was an uneveness in the height of the rises which led to stumbling up and falling down, also the fact that the handrail of the bannisters terminated before the top of the stairs was reached, thus rendering the upper hall a perfect death-trap for the unwary.

All these and other eccentricities indicated lack of skill on the part of the local carpenters and, still more, the absence of an architect's plan. If only an understanding architect could have been consulted before the alterations had been undertaken the change could have been made without losing the character and atmosphere of the old house which, judging from all that remained untouched, must have had real charm and individuality.

However it housed us most comfortably, and we soon learned to adapt ourselves to its peculiarities. The most annoying of these was a trap-door in the floor at the end of the dining room which had to be raised to allow of access by steps to the cellar, there being no outside entrance. Across this end of the dining room, and concealing the trap-door, was a wooden partition fitted on one side with shelves and cupboards so that it formed a makeshift butler's pantry. Coming into this pantry from the dining room or kitchen one might by a single step plunge through the trap-door if it had been left open, and

how the members of the household escaped this fate is a mystery. An outside entrance to the cellar was one of the first improvements made, and was among those necessary changes which to me are always trying because they are strictly utilitarian. There are many necessities and conveniences lacking in an old farm house and they must be added before the æsthetic side can be considered. Running water and a cellar entrance made life much smoother and easier for us, and simple wall papers and fresh paint made a vast difference in the general appearance.

Modern miracles can be accomplished in the most unpromising houses with paint, paper, dainty curtains and inexpensive chintzes. Ugly old furniture can be transformed by well-fitted slip covers, and may be supplemented by willow and low-priced wooden furniture of good design. Indeed, it seems to me that all modern interior decoration tends to make it easy for people of small means to have charming houses, particularly in the country. To such people, if they have any sense of proportion, it should be more interesting to start in a small and simple way and see things grow, rather than to attempt to do everything at once and spend the rest of the time trying to get paid up.

There were minor inconveniences in our house, such as the fact that the floors had settled round the big chimney in the center so that in walking over the broad boards one felt like the Leaning Tower of Pisa. In the sitting-room particularly, the floor rose and fell in undulations, and in sharp contrast the ceiling was made of well-matched hard wood, so that a friend,

glancing up for the first time, exclaimed, "Well, I never before saw a room with the floor on the ceiling." This little room with its old fireplace was the general living-room, while the large room which ran across the entire south end of the house was used as a guest's bedroom.

Later this became known, facetiously, as the "Public Library" because of a little scheme which I attempted to carry out there. My idea was to provide light reading for the farmers and their wives, for this was before the Rural Free Delivery, the Telephone, and the Ford car had become so universal as to bring relief to the isolation and monotony of their lives.

Accordingly my friends were asked to give such books and magazines as they could spare, what is usually called summer reading, and a very creditable library was collected, and arranged on low shelves built for it at the end of the large room. State Agricultural Reports and Experiment Station Bulletins were added as they were published, and some editions of standard authors, such as Matthew Arnold, which had been given by a generous friend with visions of a reading public consisting of retired clergymen. The shelves, stained brown, and the books in their own bright covers looked very attractive and the rest of the room was shut off by high screens. I then wrote letters to all the farmers in the vicinity, saying that the Reading Club was at their disposal, and awaited events.

I have a friend who visited me frequently in those years and I have heard her give graphic descriptions of sleeping in the Public Library, and of the intrusion

at all times of night and day of men, women, and children waiting in anxious queues for books. But as a matter of fact this delightful fiction never came true, and my one and only applicant was a little old woman who lived on the farm above us.

One morning I saw her coming down the road and realized from her gala attire that a visit of some importance was impending. She wore a little pinched black bonnet with a spray of jet in front, such as some of us are fortunate enough to have preserved from our grandmother's days, a dress of stiff black silk, crochetted mitts and, though it was a grilling hot day, a dolman. A mincing walk and a manner equally unfamiliar were assumed for the occasion, and I must confess that as she entered and expressed herself willing to look at the library I had a foreboding that it would not be up to her standards.

"I will just look through the catalogue," she said, sinking into a chair, and for the first time it occurred to me that I ought to have a catalogue. Feeling most apologetic I read over the titles of a number of books that I thought might suit, but without success. She then astonished me by asking for the *Atlantic Monthly* and I was obliged to confess that this, too, was lacking, and the little old lady departed empty-handed, but with, I am sure, an inner satisfaction which bore her buoyantly and mincingly back to her farm.

Longer experience showed me the mistake of attempting to circulate books among country people in summer; the days are far too full of work both for the farmer and his wife. It is in winter that books

are welcome, and eventually my Public Library was packed into little traveling bookcases, and was circulated up and down the roads by the people themselves. It brought me a wide acquaintance among my neighbors, and many pleasant friendships which I very much prize. A better understanding between the farmer and "city people," of whom he is too apt to be suspicious, should be cultivated for their mutual advantage. If the Public Library went even a little way towards this it served its purpose.

I have dwelt, perhaps, too much on the peculiarities of my old house but I do so only to show what can be done with unpromising material. There is nothing more delightful than to see a house take on character and interest as it expands to meet the needs of a growing family, and rambles in one direction and another, with little steps up and down as rooms are added and verandahs or terraces built out. Such expansion came gradually to my house by way of the architect's blue-print which I have recommended for the desk drawer. There are drawbacks to this method for the period of being torn up is prolonged and I may add that our carpenters became almost members of the family, but it enabled us to do each bit of work thoroughly, and there was no need of cheapening materials or workmanship in order to get the whole job done for a small sum.

The first addition was a dining porch built at the east side of the house with a sleeping porch above. The sleeping porch is recommended as a life-saving device for people with boys, as any number of their

friends can be tucked in there without upsetting the rest of the house.

Later developments in the evolution of the old house were the building of a large verandah across the front with a bedroom above, and the lengthening of the little sitting-room with a sleeping porch above the extension. The kitchen wing was rebuilt and made larger, and the kitchen itself now rejoices in a porch enclosed with lattice work and screens which serves as a dining-sitting room, while a small verandah on the other side is a pleasant gathering place in hot weather.

The rebuilding included a butler's pantry, and the partition and cupboards at the end of the dining room were, accordingly, done away with. My china and glass were partially demolished in this removal for the head carpenter, who was totally deaf, attacked the partition from the dining room with an axe and was wholly unconscious of the crashing and falling plates and glasses on the other side. It was not until the whole household had rushed in, attracted by the noise, that his hand was stayed. During their occupancy the carpenters continually brought questions and messages to their chief such as "How about them two by fours?" written on timbers or shingles or whatever was handy, and from cellar to roof our house conceals this busy correspondence beneath its paint. I myself learned much about good craftsmanship by watching these workmen, and many eleventh-hour inspirations and changes were made possible by the fact that I was on the spot.

The old hall had always been an eyesore as it was

The Entrance Hall

one of those, so familiar in poorly designed houses, where one opens the front door only to plunge upon the ugly stairs facing it. In this case it was extremely difficult to alter the stairway because of the narrowness of the hall. The problem was solved most satisfactorily by tearing out a meaningless closet in the large room (which ceased to be the Public Library and became the drawing-room), and by removing the huge chimney with the green tile facing and building an outside one on the other side of the room. With this added space thrown into the hall the stairs were built in at the rear end, where they ascend five steps to a landing and then return along the right-hand wall, providing a roomy closet beneath for wraps, and leaveing a pleasant open entrance.

A dull-yellow tile floor in the hall is both attractive and labor-saving in the country, where muddy boots and dogs are constantly tracking in and out.

The walls are painted deep cream and stand much washing, and they are made gay by long narrow wall-paper panels picturing orange trees in little green tubs. The panels are shellaced and rubbed down to give the tone and shading of old parchment. The mahogany hand rail and the bannisters were found in an old house from which I rescued them, with other fine old woodwork, just as the building was in process of demolition. The large iron box lock and brass knobs of the front door were also taken from this house, but the door itself, eight paneled and substantial, was discovered in the débris of an old inn which had just been razed to the ground.

If one is really keen to add good architectural features to one's house it will not be found at all difficult in these swiftly moving times, when fine old buildings are continually being torn down to make way for business houses or apartments. It is indeed simpler to pick up old wood-work at a reasonable price than to collect good antique furniture, but even this is still possible to one who keeps eyes and ears open.

In proof of this I cite the case of my dining-room furniture which consists of eight very lovely old rush-bottomed Dutch chairs, decorated with tulips in three shades of gilt. They are quite different from any others I have seen, and had belonged to a Dutch family who had brought much of their furniture from Holland. When the last of the family died the contents of the house were sold at public auction in the village grocery store, and the eight chairs were "knocked down" to me at two dollars and a half apiece.

For many years I could find no table that looked well with the painted chairs, but eventually I came across two well-proportioned old consoles of pine, and employed a cabinet-maker to make a drop-leaf table of similar design to which they could be attached. Ordinarily the consoles stand against the wall at opposite ends of the room, but on occasion can be attached to form one long oval table. All these are painted black like the chairs with lines of gilt and the tulip decoration on the aprons. Sheets of plate glass cut to fit the tops save the painted surface and do not prevent the use of table cloths when desired.

A screen and curtains of quaint chintz in blues and

cream, painted walls and wood-work of Persian Blue, and the wide shallow fireplace with its crane and brass fittings, make this a charming room, and charm is often a difficult thing to attain in dining rooms, for too often they are cursed by the setness of their required furniture, and the obviousness of their purpose. At one end is a closet in which food stores are kept, and the door to this is a solid, flat piece of wood which shows a pleasantly uneven surface as though generations of children had pushed against it to loot the cookie jar. On the same side as the fireplace there is another pantry which I had built for my own selfish purposes, and I recommend it to all who garden. It has hot and cold water, and convenient shelves for vases, flower holders, baskets, scissors, etc., etc. In it I can arrange my flowers in peace without disturbing the kitchen or the butler's pantry. If there is a nook in your old farm house which can be so converted I advise you to insist upon it in that architect's plan by which you are to live, and move, and have your being.

As I think over the evolution of my house in an effort to recall changes which may be helpful and suggestive to others, I note but few in the little sitting-room, which is always flooded with sunshine as the extension built on consists almost entirely of casement windows. A simple, square trellis work running up between these windows and around the ceiling above give it an air of summer and out of doors, and this impression is heightened by robin's egg blue walls and wood-work, curtains of green gauze with narrow blue and green binding, and sofa and chair cushions

of light green chintz covered with apple blossoms. Plain rugs of a deeper green, and old, painted Colonial chairs, a small mahogany secretary picked up in a seaport of Maine, a little narrow table bought for fifty cents and admirable for books beside the chaise longue, these and a few other odd pieces furnish the room, and prove, I think, that pleasant effects can be produced at small expense.

The large drawing-room is the one in the construction of which I was most interested as my very amiable architect incorporated into it much old wood-work from the same house which produced my stair rail and bannisters. The lower part of the walls is paneled with the solid inside window shutters. They are skillfully fitted in above the baseboard and finished at the top with moldings.

At each side of the broad fireplace are flat pilasters, also old, running up to the ceiling and a similar pair opposite; beams span the ceiling from the top of these, and there is a cornice around the whole room. The wall above the wooden wainscoting is of plaster marked off with molding into well-spaced panels. An old door was given to me to use as a solid panel over the fireplace but proved to be too large to fit. A smaller replica of it was, therefore, made for the space, and while all my old wood-work remains in perfect condition this panel has drawn apart and warped in the trying way new lumber has, even when it is supposed to be well seasoned.

The walls and wood-work here are also a green-blue but of a greener and lighter shade than in the sitting-

Panelling in the Drawing Room

room, and the floor, as in the rest of the house, is of oak, rather dark in tone and waxed. Such dark shades, whether of hard wood or of paint, seem more appropriate for a house of this type, while light woods, like birch, are best suited to delicate French furniture and Persian rugs.

Two French doors lead out to a stone-flagged terrace with a simple pergola above. The terrace was built by a neighboring farmer, and as he worked I followed up with rock plants to fill in the interstices between the stones. He was particularly puzzled about the pergola, and asked a dozen times what it was for anyway. I think I feel much the same about pergolas, and I quite sympathized when he ceased to struggle with the word and called it the "peculiar," by which title it continues to be known.

Prior to all these alterations the house had much the appearance of a high, narrow, packing box, but now that it has spread out in all directions it seems to fit down on to the land and a really pleasant dwelling has evolved out of a most unpromising beginning.

It has one good point which is not usual in American houses,—every room has a door which can be closed to ensure warmth, quiet, and privacy. The popular idea that a house should open up for entertaining with all rooms running together, like the unfenced lawns outside, seems mistaken in view of the fact that entertaining is not a matter of every day, whereas comfort is, or should be.

This lengthy description may seem uncalled for but it is given as an encouragement to those who hesitate

to buy an old farm house because it is not their idea of a country place. I know of no better way of securing the beginnings of a home, and the rest is a matter of ingenuity and patience.

CHAPTER IX

The Building

It has become almost a habit among parents to complain of the restlessness of the modern generation and to sigh for the good old days when boys and girls were content to stay at home. The restlessness is ascribed to various causes,—the war, too much money, a reaction against Victorianism, or any other reason which does not involve the parents in responsibility, but I think the cause may often be found nearer home. If fathers are immoderate in business or golf, and mothers are equally extreme in their devotion to charitable boards or bridge, it is no wonder that their children are also lacking in repose, though their energy takes a different form.

The realization of this comes usually when it is too late to make a change in either parents or children, for both must be caught young. If the children are to be simple, unspoiled, and contented, they must be brought up so from the start, and this brings me back to my subject which is not child raising but country places. The two go so well together, however, that I cannot too often recommend a trial of the combination. A most invaluable aid to contentment is to learn to be observant, and to have many interests and resources within oneself, and the best way to acquire these is as a child in the country.

By this I do not mean that babies can be dumped down alone, or with nurses, to discover for themselves that "the world is so full of a number of things," for the teaching of this is a mother's job and if she is any good at it she will find new fields of interest opening up constantly. Ask a farmer's child the name of any weed, flower, shrub, tree, or bird and he probably cannot tell you. For, though these objects may be under his feet or within his vision day in and day out, he is barely conscious of them; it has never been pointed out to him that they have any beauty or interest. Yet such knowledge can be picked up from a little hand-book carried about in one's pocket, and adds immeasurably to the fullness of life. It is like listening to music when one has some understanding of technique and composition, one recognizes with a thrill of pleasure certain motifs running in and out and the whole takes on meaning and beauty.

Nature study is now being taught in schools, but how much pleasanter to save time in the already overcrowded curriculum and learn all these delightful things, not as lessons but as a part of everyday life. An oriole's nest swinging low in an old apple tree is fascinating from the moment the eggs hatch out into palpitating little balls of orange fluff until the birds are full grown and flash in and out among the leaves like flames.

There are so many diversions in the country that I can mention only a few which have been particularly popular among the children in my own neighborhood; butterfly and moth collecting and mounting, a study

of birds and their songs (but not egg collecting), flower and vegetable gardening, building aquariums, collecting and pressing wild flowers, and fishing and shooting in season. I add this last because it is essential to inculcate a respect for the game laws early.

Such things together with tennis, golf, and swimming, fill the pleasant days, but how about bad weather in the country? The answer to this problem is the barn, and since I have made some derogatory remarks about "wild barns," I must make my apologies to these invaluable mother's helpers.

As buying an old farm is the surest way to secure a good water supply and fine trees, so also is it the cheapest way to get a good barn. In driving through the country one often notices large barns with an insignificant house, and the former, being the more vital to the success of the farm, are usually kept in better repair than the latter.

As the original owner of our place was not a farmer it is quite natural that the barn should have been small and inadequate. However it had attained a remarkable longevity before a decided list in the floor and roof made it seem advisable to pull it down. By this time it was probably ready to go all at once, for within a few days a horse's stall collapsed and an automobile sank gently through the floor.

In building anew we decided to cover all our needs both present and future, to aim at permanence, and to make the building a part of the architectural scheme of the whole place.

The new building was placed much farther from the garden than the old barn had stood, but near enough to the house to be convenient. It was built in the form of an L, forming the two sides of a courtyard, and the other two were bounded by a tall picket fence. The court was paved with crushed stone and, at the entrance and exit of the drive, a feature was made of stone piers.

This was my first experience in new construction and I found it absorbing to watch a well-designed substantial building rise from the foundation. As it contains many suggestions for keeping young people happy and contented at home, I shall give in some detail the plan of the whole.

First of all, as a warning to those who intend to build a garage, I must tell of an amazing mistake that was made. The garage, which occupies the lower floor of most of the long part of the L, was designed to be absolutely fire proof, for there is no sort of fire protection in the neighborhood except hand extinguishers. The floor and ceiling were laid in concrete with steel girders, and the walls were made of hollow tile. In spite of the large expense of this it was represented to be economical as well as safe, as it would considerably reduce the high insurance rates. When the insurance inspector came to look at the finished work he pointed out that the garage was not fire proof as the doors were not sheathed with steel and the spaces above them and over the windows were of ordinary construction. The changes were so expensive that they have never been carried out, but had the

insurance requirements been consulted in the first place the mistake would never have occurred.

The rest of the ground floor is taken up with a tool room with a work bench for the boys, a wash room, a stable, and a carriage room with cupboards for garden tools, etc.

The stairway to the second floor has an entrance all its own, with a ship's lantern over it upon which a phœbe insists upon perching her nest every year. Up these stairs, with their apple-green walls, children have worn a well-beaten path to the floor above. Here a hallway leads on one side to a kitchen, with cupboards well stocked with kitchen utensils and china. The small electric stove is delightfully simple to manage and not expensive to run (if one remembers to turn off the electricity when not in use).

Across the hall a passage, flanked by large closets, opens into a bath room with shower. Both kitchen and bath room have floors made of a composition which has the appearance and cleanliness of tiling at a fraction of the cost.

Next, on each side of the hall, is a small bedroom, one with a window overlooking the court yard and the other with a view into the rose garden. These rooms are used as studies by my boys and are hung with school and college pictures, and incidentally serve for extra guests when the house is full.

Beyond these the hall opens into a long play-room which extends to the end of the building. This room has been the scene of so many good times, and is such a godsend to parents and children of the neighbor-

hood on rainy days, that it deserves a description. The ceiling is built considerably below the roof so as to leave an air space between to prevent too great heat in summer and too much loss of it in winter. It slopes down from a rather high point in the centre to low side walls in which the many dormer windows are set. Both ceiling and walls have a slightly roughened surface, colored a soft tone of buff yellow by mixing yellow ochre with dry cement. The result is a pleasant color and an indestructible surface which has withstood all sorts of games and hard usage.

Along the peak of the room and running down from it to form panels around the dormers, are flat moldings stained brown like the doors and the rest of the wood-work. The floor is of oak, and at the farther end it is raised to form a low stage with three wide shallow steps leading up to it. At the back of the stage, in the centre, is a large stone chimney, and in front of the log fires, on cold nights, popcorn is made and marshmallows toasted to an accompaniment of songs and ghost stories. At each side of the fireplace is a small window with cupboards beneath, which are destined to be "glory-holes" containing all the playthings past and present.

These rooms occupy the long part of the L, and the shorter part contains the hay loft, which is seldom more than half full of hay so that it forms an admirable green-room for the stage, from which there is an exit into it. Plays and charades are favorite entertainments, and the stage is also useful for the musicians for a simple dance. An old piano, not too good

The Play-Room

to be left there all winter, is on this platform, also two stout benches with cushions on each side of the fireplace, large screens covered with glazed chintz, an old rug, and a few comfortable chairs. Four of the same benches are used in the lower part of the hall and can be used as seats for an audience or pushed back against the wall at dances.

An old walnut dining room table (bought years ago for one dollar and a half) can be pulled out to an astonishing length for impromptu suppers, or may hold the lemonade bowl, the phonograph, the balopticon, or whatever the occasion requires. Best of all, there is a fine billiard table, the gift of a friend, which gives pleasure to all in the neighborhood.

Running the length of the room are two rows of lights hanging from the ceiling and shaded by upturned Chinese coolie hats with bright tassels. At the windows are gay little shades of glazed chintz, edged and tasseled with worsted fringes.

To this playroom come all the trophies which do not fit in well with conventional surroundings,—tapa cloth from Hawaii, quaint old maps, Japanese figures on the mantel shelf, bits of peasant pottery, and an old sea chest with a full rigged ship carved on the front. It is a room which seems to suit every age, and has served all sorts of purposes from theatricals to the making of surgical dressings during the war. It has seen delightful suppers cooked and served by the children, candy pulls, Hallowe'en parties and, perhaps best of all, "stunt parties" to which all ages are invited, and each guest is expected to do something to entertain the rest.

To develop the possibilities of a barn, ingenuity and imagination are more necessary than a long purse, and often, in a neighborhood of congenial people, the various forms of entertainment can be divided up among the different families. If one place has as its special attraction a playhouse-barn such as I have described, another may have a tennis court, another a croquet ground, or a swimming pool. In this way expense and effort are curtailed and no one mother shoulders all the burden.

On rainy days our barn hums with various activities and only the two studies are barred to intrusion. These rooms have passed through many phases of decoration, some of which have been very painful (particularly the era of Indian heads and arrows on every possible object), but a process of discrimination and elimination goes on there that does much to develop good taste. I notice that rooms furnished by fond parents or interior decorators in the way they think boys should like them seldom rouse the same pride and interest.

In the kitchen, cooking has been learned without disturbing the household, for supplies are kept separate and there is no running back and forth to borrow, or in the words of the song, "Well, hardly ever." Here the tasteful arrangement of flowers and the setting of tables as well as the preparation of meals can be learned, not as a hateful drudgery, but as a delightful and exciting pursuit. Surprise parties and birthday cakes are turned out with ease, but to get an entire meal all cooked at the proper time is a far greater feat, and this takes actual working experience.

Although our building was specially designed for its various purposes, I believe the same ideas could be carried out in any old barn, and if it is needed for storing farm crops, it will still be the most delightful playhouse in the world, for what can compare with playing in the hay? I remember my horror one day, in passing a neighbor's, to see a child depending, apparently in space, outside a closed window in the second story of the hay barn. It was only a fleeting glimpse in motoring by and it seemed an eternity of time before I could turn back and reach the crushed form that I expected to find on the ground. When I at last stood breathless beneath the window I was greeted with indignant "hooschings" from above, and discovered my victim sitting in an ancient horse-collar which was fastened in some mysterious way by a strap to a nail inside the window. How the child had managed to climb into the collar and shut the window after her without the aid of a confederate I cannot imagine, but she explained to me in a stage whisper that a game of hide-and-seek was going on inside, and that no one would ever find her if I would please not make a noise. After this, stringent rules had to be made as to legitimate risks in the barn and several hair-raising exploits were discovered and forbidden. It was this same adventurous little girl visiting in our quiet neighborhood who staged a most blood-curdling tragedy in our playroom. The "Perils of Pauline" were as nothing compared with this, and it taxed all resources of actors and scenery. One baby of five years was discovered staggering along the road to our barn, dragging what

looked to be the thigh bone of an ox which, she said, was all that was to be left of the beautiful heroine.

From its very inception our barn was an object of interest, and the carpenters took an immense pride in its solid structure and many uses. They always referred to it as "the building," and often brought their families around on Sundays to show them how the work was progressing, or displayed it proudly to friends who dropped in, en route to the village, to watch the construction. This resulted often in a veritable fleet of cars parked around the place, and it was not to be wondered that our house was constantly mistaken for a roadhouse which had recently been opened about three miles beyond us, particularly as a sign at our corner seemed to point directly at our door for "Trout and Chicken Dinners." One Saturday afternoon, as I stood watching the work, a large heavily-loaded automobile drove up and immediately sank in the soft mud into which the ground had been churned by rains and work teams. At once the carpenters went to the rescue and by the aid of planks and many hands succeeded in getting the car out of the slough. The occupants thereupon descended and, to my surprise, sauntered toward the front verandah of the house. It was quite evidently a wedding party, as bridesmaids' dresses, top hats, and boutonnieres bore witness. One of the group, probably the best-man, seeing me evidently a part of the place, stopped to enquire pleasantly if I was staying there and if the meals were good. I answered quite truthfully, "Not always," and perhaps a twinkle in my eye gave him an inkling of his mistake,

at all events, when assured that we had neither trout nor chicken, he gathered up his young ladies from the verandah and departed in great embarrassment. It was one dark night soon after this that the obnoxious sign disappeared from our corner, and we were left to our rural peace once more.

So much that has grown up in and around this barn is still a promise, and some has fulfilled the highest and loveliest of our hopes and gone on to wider opportunities and more lovely harmonies, but it is happiness to look back upon it all and to feel that the best and simplest pleasures have gathered here, and if my garden has had its evolution, so, too, has "The Building" in the human character that has been fostered within its walls.

CHAPTER X

My Garden Comes of Age

It is impossible to say which year of human life is the happiest, though old people will continue to tell indignant boys and girls that their school days are best. But I have no uncertainty about my herbaceous border, its twenty-first year is its best. The only debatable point is whether it is really twenty-one years old, for as the beds were completely dug out and replanted last Autumn it might be more correct to speak of it as an infant, and if so it has got through its first summer surprisingly well.

However, the twenty-one years of experience that lie behind it remain, and there are suggestions in the present arrangement and color scheme that may be helpful not only to those who are making a border, but to those whose gardens are on a small scale, for the individual sections in which my borders are planned often form little gardens in themselves.

It is only fair to acknowledge that many of my happiest flower combinations have been accidents. I have stuck in something to fill a gap and have been surprised later on with a charming harmony of color which I have adopted with alacrity. Sometimes it has been a fortunate choice of location, as was the case in the position of my Dahlias this Summer, when the only

place available to put them was in a row behind the Arbor Vitæ hedge of the rose garden. There they were planted and, growing far above the top of the hedge, nodded their gay heads over it and proved one of the most admired features of the garden. The evergreens concealed the stakes and rather rank foliage at the base and gave them an effect of delicacy and grace usually lacking in Dahlias.

On the other hand, the most studied effects are often disappointing, either the flowers refuse to bloom in combination, or the colors, which have been enthusiastically praised by someone else, prove not at all to one's own liking. Last year I planted Salvia azurea grandiflora under Lilium Henrii, hoping for a ravishing harmony of apricot and light blue, but the shaded spot in which the Lilies were thriving did not suit the Salvia, which, like all Sages, prefers a hot, dry location, with the result that nothing appeared among the Lilies except sickly stalks lying prostrate and making no effort to bloom.

When the studied arrangement is successful, however, the reward is worth all the trouble and gives one a sense of personal achievement. In a mixed border there is ample opportunity to study all sorts of combinations and, by comparing height, color, form, and period of bloom, to achieve good planting in course of time.

It seems to be a general impression that a mixed herbaceous border is the easiest sort of garden to make, because there one can grow all the sorts of flowers one likes, and that it doesn't matter a bit about

colors because one wants it to be gay. Never was there a greater mistake, and I believe the present fad for making gardens of one color is a reaction against the hodge-podge of discordant hues which is literally a "mixed border."

The "blue garden" and the "white garden" seem to me a little cowardly. If they carry out their color scheme consistently they became like rooms furnished in "all one period," which are too correct to have charm, or are, at best, not quite comfortable.

Both study and experience are needed to provide a border with bloom along its whole length during the season, and to ensure harmonious coloring. My own plan is to grow flowers of one color or a combination of certain colors for a distance, and then to merge them into a harmonizing color arrangement, or to separate them from what may be discordant by the use of flowering shrubs or large clumps of white flowers.

Spring bulbs and Tulips may be tucked in anywhere to form their own color schemes for they are too early to clash with perennials, while very late flowers, such as Heleniums and Anemones, may also be discounted. The flowers of June, July and August, however, must be treated carefully and their blooming periods well known. A valuable aid to this is "The Garden Month by Month," by Mabel Cabot Sedgwick. In this book can be found all the best hardy perennials, their color, height, dates of bloom, and method of cultivation; so that if, for example, a blue and yellow planting in the border is desired, it is quite

simple to find flowers of those colors to bloom throughout a succession of months.

In my borders I still make use of all my old "Standbys," but my earlier color scheme has altered somewhat as my taste in color combinations has changed, and as I have sought wider variety and a longer blooming season. In my first section, for instance, I no longer stick to white flowers only but, starting at the entrance with a rather formal planting of stately Yuccas, tall white Phlox, and white Foxgloves and ferns, I follow on with creamy yellow Iris flavescens combined with the delicate lavender of Phlox Divaricata Canadensis (dug from woods nearby), a soft yellow Pumilla Iris, the Poetaz Narcissus Elvira and, springing up everywhere amongst them, the little fairy-like Camassia Leichtlini in cream and mauve. The lavender Tulip Melicette and pale yellow Moonlight lie in drifts at the front of this section, and there are great clumps of fragrant Garden Heliotrope (Valerian), while at the rear, for late blooming, are groupings of pale pink Hollyhocks and, still later, Anemone Queen Charlotte. The tall ferns veil the shabbiness of the Foxgloves when their beauty is past, and there are two new Arendsi Phloxes, Grete and Charlotte, which add their pretty light lavender flowers to the color scheme from the middle of June almost continuously to the end of August. When the Tulips and other Spring flowers have died down, I tuck in Southcote Beauty Asters in lavendar and purple wherever there is space. These lovely single Asters are to me

more artistic than the double forms, and I start them in the hot-bed to fill just such vacant spots.

The delicate coloring of this first part becomes stronger in section two, and the bright salmon pink, which is the keynote, appears early in the lovely Darwin Tulip, "Clara Butt." Irregular plantings of this tall Tulip run in and out on both sides behind the Narcissus Poeticus of the edging, and are charming seen beyond the lavenders and creams of the first section.

Next are masses of Sweet William "Newport Pink" at the front, and behind these Phlox "Elizabeth Campbell", succeeding each other in bloom and color. By snipping off the flower heads of this beautiful Phlox as it withers a continuous show can be maintained to the end of the season. Behind this again are bright pink Hollyhocks which seem to soar upward in an effort to overtop the Tartarian Honeysuckles which are planted behind the border.

As this bright pink needs softening, there are tall clumps of creamy white flowers with important foliage next,—Giant Meadow Rue (Thalictrum polygamum) and Artemisia lactiflora. The Meadow Rue is found frequently along the roadside but cannot be appreciated until seen growing under cultivation; its Aquilegia-like foliage and foamy flowers make splendid clumps, and it continues in bloom from June until September. The Artemisia is one of the real indispensables, it flowers through September and has the elusive fragrance of Water Lilies. There are Japanese Anemones in front to carry on the white still later.

Beyond these are groups of Fraxinella alba, with

White Hollyhocks behind, and pink Lupines in front. The Fraxinella has dark glossy foliage and tall spikes of pungent creamy flowers, not unlike Lemon Verbena in fragrance, and with the added attraction of igniting in a little burst of flame when touched with a lighted match. This parlor trick has earned for the flower the name of "Gas Plant," and does not seem in the least to affect its well being. Fraxinella resents moving, however, and when once established should be left undisturbed. Perhaps this is why one so seldom sees it now except in old gardens.

Its next-door neighbor is Coquelicot Phlox, which flaunts its flame-colored masses after the delicate shell-pink Penstemmons at its feet are over. It is one of those happy accidents, I must confess, that all these pinks and whites lie just beneath an old apple tree, and in Spring, when its boughs are bursting with bloom or scattering a snow storm of petals among the pink Tulips below, the picture is too enchanting for description.

The planting of the next section, number three, continues the bright pinks but combined now not with white but with soft blues and lavender. Clara Butt is planted with the lavender Darwin Tulip Dream, and there is a mist of Forget-me-nots which have been allowed to self-sow all through the beds. Later there are Sweet Williams, then Ploxes of varying shades of pink flowering from early to late, with Antoine Mercier, a low-growing Phlox, to add the necessary lavender. With these are blue Sea Hollies (Eryngium amethystinum) in front, and Globe Thistles (Echinops

Ritro) at the very rear. The Globe Thistles are valuable for their astounding height and huge leaves. They have what we may call "style," but they are biennials with a habit of sowing themselves all over the garden and must be carefully watched to be kept in their place.

So far in my planting it may be noticed that the same coloring is maintained in a section through its whole period of blooming, as in this last there were pinks and blues from Tulips to Phlox. In this way discords are avoided, even though some things may flower too early or too late. The blending and harmony with the neighboring section must also be studied, for these divisions are, after all, as imaginary as the equator. Thus, as a transition from the salmon pinks and blues of number three to the strong blues of number four, I use the soft buff of perennial Foxgloves (Digitalis grandiflora) and beyond the early and late Lemon Lilies (Hemerocallis flava and H. Thunbergii) and Chinese Delphiniums.

This brings us to section four and, as I have outgrown my former fondness for blue and yellow, I have planted it in varying shades of blue with white to accentuate, purely a matter of personal taste. The main point of interest is the setting, for all these blues have as background the White Pines which mark the end of the section. Imagine, then, in succession of bloom,—lavender Tulips (Rev. Ewbank) and Forget-me-nots, Iris Pallida dalmatica, False Indigo (Baptisia australis), white-and-blue and deep-blue Monkshood (Aconite), Speedwell (Veronica longifolia var. subsessilis), and through and above all great plantings

The Border in September

of Delphinium hybridum with white Phlox ("Mrs. Jenkins") and Meadow Rue, all these against the blue-green of the pines.

Late in the Fall there is a ravishing combination of Heleniums (var. superbum and Riverton Gem) with a tall deep-blue Aconite, which entirely negatives what I have said about blue with yellow.

Among the flowers of this section are some which I particularly recommend. The Veronica subsessilis is lovely in any garden that can give it plenty of sun, its soft blue harmonizes with everything and is charming here, seen beyond the salmon pinks of the preceding section.

The Baptisia australis has Wistaria-like flowers of indigo, and its bluish-green foliage is so good that it is well worth a place in the border even though its blooming period is short.

Some people consider the Heleniums weedy and give them their common name "Sneezeweed," but there is no hardy perennial more appropriate to its blooming season than this yellow, russet, and mahogany colored flower of September and October.

The Aconites grow well in a moist shady place, such as their position near the pines, where the sun-loving Delphiniums could not thrive. I use them supplementarily but never as a substitute for the latter, for nothing can take the place of well-grown hybrid Delphiniums.

When gardeners attempt to list the ten indispensible perennials, much as we have all tried to choose our ten best books for a desert island, they invariably

include Delphiniums, and sometimes at the head of the list.

In a mixed border it is not always possible to achieve perfection in bloom. I myself try principally for pictorial effects, but I find that Delphiniums, even under difficulties, amply repay any effort to grow for height, color, and length of flowering stalk. This perfection can be obtained only by buying the best obtainable seed (at almost any price), and by giving them good soil, plenty of bone-meal, soot around the crowns in the Fall, and all the space and sunshine possible. If the dreaded "black-spot" appears on the leaves, or before it appears, spray with Bordeaux and use powdered lime-stone sprinkled about the plants. As in all gardening, strong healthy growth is the surest prevention against disease.

Beneath the pine trees, where shade-loving plants must now be used, I have put pale lavender Sweet Rocket (Hesperis) which thrives and is very lovely in deep shade, though it likes best sunshine and butterflies. With it are Ferns, Foxgloves, Forget-me-nots, Moccasin Flower (Cypripedium acaule), and the Spring bulbs so well called Guinea-hen Flowers (Frittilaria Meleagris), which are themselves little chequered shadows. There is also a happy combination of yellow Primroses (Primula vulgaris) blooming with Grape Hyacinths (Muscari) "Heavenly Blue." The Primroses are the creamy yellow of the "Munstead Strain," and with the Grape Hyacinths are an unqualified success.

Throughout the first part of my borders, as far as

the cross path, I still use Narcissus Poeticus for an early edging, followed by Sweet Alyssum, sown annually over the bulbs. In the gravel of the walk itself I have now established a low-growing hedge of Artemisia Stelleriana, the "Old Man" or "Old Woman" of our grandmothers' gardens, which conceals the wooden edging of the beds, and is kept sheared down to form a cloudy gray mass of foliage without blossoms.

Where the cross path intersects the borders I have tried to make the corner planting a salient feature, repeating it at all four corners to gain effect. Its weak point lies in the fact that I have used perennials, which tend to do better in some corners than in others. For dependability in such a corner planting it is safer to use a rounded or columnar evergreen, either dwarf in growth or kept clipped, or, if climate permits, a shaped bush of Box.

In a little cottage garden near here the owner (an English gardener) has used our common Snowberry (Symphorocarpus racemosus) for this purpose, and by planting it when small and keeping it clipped he has got much the effect of English topiary work in Box or Yew. This is full of suggestiveness for our severe climate and could undoubtedly be carried out in other hardy shrubs.

As we have reached the cross path and are so near the arbor it is wise to rest a few moments, and chat about planting material for borders.

One peculiarity of the mixed herbaceous border which I have already touched upon is the fact that it

is not the place to grow for perfection of bloom. Not only must it of necessity be too full to admit of this (unless one is willing to see each plant isolated in a stark circle of earth), but it is by its very natu e designed for garden flowers, not for huge disbudded blooms. The pictures that it makes as one looks along its length, the combination of colors near at hand, are what give it character and charm, and not the size of its individual flowers.

For this reason floriferous and hardy varieties are more desirable in a border than shy bloomers, at least for the mainstays. I plant my expensive and rare sorts of Iris in my Rose-garden, for there they can have plenty of room and cultivation, and if they bloom but little it does not spoil my picture. But in the border I put the most dependable sorts which make big clumps and stand some overcrowding. If a new or rare variety proves to have the same good qualities I can divide it as it increases, and move it from the Rose garden to replace an inferior kind, but until then I prefer those that I know and trust for the border.

The same thing is true of Peonies, and this by no means implies coarseness or lack of beauty. It is not without reason that such old favorites as Festiva Maxima have held their own throughout the years. It is a common mistake in buying flowers, as in other things in this world, to assume that high price ensures high quality. As a matter of fact it usually indicates either that the variety is new and therefore not yet largely on the market, or that it increases or seeds sparingly and is therefore expensive to raise. One

has only to compare plant catalogues of a few years ago with those of the current season and see how certain varieties have gone down in price to realize that this is so.

Having made sure of plenty of robust reliable perennials, it is always possible to tuck in odd little flowers here and there for spice and variety, and it is in the farther end of my border beyond the cross path that I am now trying to leaven the lump of my Phloxes with more varied and unusual material.

So, as we have been sufficiently discursive about border planting in general, we will leave our comfortable seat in the arbor and take a stroll to the woods, glancing briefly at both sides as we go.

In planning this longer end of the borders, I found the conditions very different from the first part, where the pine trees and varying elevations made it possible to plant some of the sections almost as little individual gardens. Here the view of the whole is uninterrupted, and the space behind the beds is much broader and more open.

The problem here was to get big effects without monotony, and to secure a reasonable amount of bloom throughout the whole length without sacrificing those big effects. I will explain what I mean by recalling to mind that in my earlier arrangement of this end it was largely a Phlox garden. In Phlox season,—August, September, and into October, the borders were on that grand scale which the setting seems to demand, but up to that time there was not enough bloom all the way or all the time to give the needed effect, and as

the borders could not be shut off or disregarded it was very distressing.

I have overcome this difficulty by widening the beds, and thus giving room for many flowers in front of the Phloxes; by planting shrubs or large balanced clumps of some high-growing perennial opposite to each other in each section; by making my sections an average length of thirteen feet instead of ten so that the stretches of similar plantings are longer; by using massings of Phlox all the way, not in straight ranks at the rear, but running forward in curves to the centre of the beds, and receding to narrow points in which are planted the balanced shrubs or perennials; and, lastly, by using certain bulbs and perennials repeatedly throughout to secure a continuation of effect.

These are simple rules for broad effects and have proved successful. The large shrubs or clumps at intervals not only give balance and height, but also separate the sections sufficiently to permit the use of bold coloring; and the repetition of certain flowers throughout insures a picture as one looks along the path to the woods.

If it were in May that we were taking this stroll I could promise you a lovely vista of Tulips, in colors tender and bright, rising above the slow-growing foliage of the perennials about them. This is a charming way to grow Tulips, and six or eight of a sort tucked in wherever there is room, fill an otherwise empty season with delight.

If it is in June that we are looking along our borders, our repeated effects are made by German Iris and

Lupines. In July by Foxgloves, Delphiniums, and Hollyhocks; in August and September by Phlox and Hydrangeas.

This is giving away trade secrets, the fabric underlying my further borders, which, when once established, ensures a sufficient quantity and continuity of bloom to allow me to devote the rest of the space to a variety of other flowers.

As perennials finish blooming I draw upon my stock of annuals to fill in spaces and conceal shabby foliage, as in the case of the blue Chinese Delphiniums, among which I plant annual Cornflowers to continue the color scheme after they are gone.

A combination of annuals in salmon-pink and lavender-blue which has proved most successful is made up of Zinnia "Salmon-rose," Arctotis Grandis, and Scabiosa "Azure-blue." To those who are not familiar with Arctotis Grandis I heartily recommend this daisy-like flower with pale blue petals and a deeper centre. It should be given full sun as it closes in shade, and in the house it needs a bright window where it is particularly lovely arranged with Cornflowers.

The term "Salmon-rose" seems to be a favorite one with the seedsmen this year, and I fear they are getting as arbitrary in their color descriptions as are the designers of fashions, who one season call a shade "Dregs of Wine" and the next "Egg Plant." I hope that before we completely lose our bearings we may all agree upon a color chart which will settle the matter.

It is refreshing to have a wide variety of combina-

tions and at this end of my borders, where I use Delphiniums repeatedly, I combine them with different flowers in each section; sometimes with white or apricot Hollyhocks, white Phlox, Thermopsis Carolina, Thalictrum polygamum or Thalictrum flavum, Hemerocallis Thunbergii, H. Citrina, Lilium croceum, Clematis recta or white Campanula persicifolia. I also find that it is most effective to use three or five Delphiniums of one shade together rather than to have a mixture of colorings in the group.

Lilies and Campanulas are not grown in much variety in most gardens, but with my few incursions into the two families I have grown most enthusiastic. Among the Campanulas we are apt to think of the biennial varieties first,—the Canterbury Bells (Campanula Media) and the Cup-and-Saucer Bells (C. Calycanthema), which I grow in a small garden to be described later. I grow but few biennials in my borders except those which self-sow in our soil (like Hollyhocks, Sweet Williams, and Foxgloves), for I find it too burdensome to fill large spaces with such ephemeral plants. The tall Chimney Bell Flower (Campanula pyramidalis) is also biennial and is rather reluctant to bloom in our light soil. Wherever it grows well it is a splendid addition to a garden.

Among the perennial Campanulas which I have tried and found strong growing and hardy are Campanula glomerata, a good pure white; C. glomerata superba, a light purple; and C. latifolia macrantha, a deep purple. These three are rather too coarse in foliage and too suggestive of the wild Bell Flowers (called

locally Blue Bells) to be among my favorites, but they bloom profusely and are useful in some places.

My first choice would always be the peach-leaved Bell Flowers (Campanula persicifolia), which come in white and lavender-blue. These beautiful perennials are an outstanding feature in my border, and if the individual flowers are cut off and are not allowed to seed the tall stalks with their refined foliage will continue to bloom over a long period. Another favorite is the charming little Carpathian Harebell (C. Carpatica), a most persistent and delightful low-growing flower for the front of the border.

Platycodons are somewhat similar to the peach-leaved Bell Flowers and follow close on their heels. They come in the same coloring and, planted near each other, they give a fine succession of bloom, but one must keep watch on the Campanulas to see that they do not run out, and one must not expect large striking clumps of Platycodons until the third or fourth year.

Among the Lilies which I am trying out are Lilium elegans fulgens, a delicious scarlet; L. elegans Thunbergii, a pale orange-red; L. elegans incomparabilis, a deep red; and L. elegans umbellatum, a strong grower in the same coloring. All these are low-growing American Lilies and balance each other on opposite sides of the border with Lilium Canadense, the wild wood Lily, looming tall behind them. Better than any of these is Lilium croceum whose pure orange flowers are splendid growing with the brilliant blue of Chinese Delphiniums. Scattered in front of the Lily plantings are groups of the tiny but exquisite Coral Lily

(Lilium tenuifolium) which never fails to arouse admiration.

Other Lilies which are successful in the border are the American Turks Cap Lilies (L. superbum) which this year shot up to an amazing height like young palm trees, and were barely overtopped by the eight-feet tall Bocconia cordata, against which they were growing. L. Henryi and L. Hansoni are less ambitious but more lovely in flower.

I have purposely refrained from growing Auratum, Regale, Speciosum, and Candidum Lillies in the borders (though they are splendid grown in large clumps in this way) for I wish to keep them as distinctive features in other places.

The newer and more unusual Lilies are rapidly coming within our reach, though not always within our means, and I am trying some of them in very small doses in a rather rich, shaded, and rooty little plot which lies behind my border under an old apple tree.

I must confine my notice only to the "high spots" in the further border, and there is one which forms a pretty bit of garden by itself, though, speaking literally, it is very low. In it are Sweet Rocket (Hesperis) and Lemon Lilies (Hemerocallis flava), each old-fashioned and commonplace by itself, but forming a very lovely and fragrant combination for either garden or house. In front of these are Tulips Gudin and Euphrosyne, in soft faded pinks and lavender,—Dianthus Mrs. Sinkins, a fine spicy white Pink,—Viola Apricot; Virginia Cowslips (Mertensia Virginica); and Colchicum speciosium and C. zonatus.

The Mertensias are lovely blue flowers of May which lose all their foliage and disappear after flowering. The Colchicums, on the other hand, make green glossy foliage in Spring which completely dies down and they bloom quite without it in September. Such little oddities help to make gardening the fascinating diversion that it is. Between these flowers are stepping stones which enable me to cross through the beds to the back of the borders, a device which is most convenient and is used in a few other places where needed.

There are but a few more perennials which I shall especially recommend, among them Clematis Davidiana, a shrubby plant with lovely lavender-blue flowers; Clematis recta which grows to be a small bush requiring light staking and covered with a foam of white flowers in June and July; and Clematis Inez Dwyer, a creeper which I train over small fan-shaped trellises on each side of the border. It wreathes itself over these supports and is laden with soft blue blossoms which are charming with pale pink Phloxes in August.

Thalictrum dipterocarpum is a recent arrival in my garden, and in spite of its prodigious name is a gem. It has feathery blossoms of soft lavender, and is even better than its relation, Thalictrum flavum, whose fine gray foliage is a lovely foil for other flowers, or than its roadside cousin T. polygamum, which attains a height of six feet and is a lovely background for Delphiniums.

The last two sections of the border are planted with blue and white flowers to give an impression of dis-

tance and mystery as one looks along the path into the woods. In order of bloom there are first white Tulips and Forget-me-nots, then white and pale blue German Iris, next white Japanese Iris with blue Lupines, then white Foxgloves with Belladonna Delphiniums and, lastly, white Phloxes, hybrid Delphiniums, Achillea, Nicotiana, Salvia azurea grandiflora, Funkia subcordata, and Veronica Virginica, a very tall Speedwell whose feathery white spikes are beautiful seen against the evergreens beyond.

The borders terminate at each side in a grouping of evergreens,—Red Cedar (Juniperis Virginiana), transplanted from the wild and kept trimmed; Chinese Juniper (Juniperis Chinensis), and Taxus Cuspidata, a spreading Yew. These beautiful little conifers in their varying shades of green are not so much a termination to the beds as they are an introduction to the woods, and they form a link between the borders and the Hemlock-edged path which leads on to the river. This impression is heightened by a continuation of the white Narcissi and Foxgloves, naturalized along the path as far as the eye can see.

During late October, or after hard frosts have destroyed the last brave flowers and hardened the ground against mice and moles, the beds are thoroughly cleaned of annuals and weeds; Phloxes, Peonies, and tall-growing perennials are cut back, and a top dressing of rough manure is applied to be forked into the soil in the Spring. If manure is not available leaves are used to cover the borders except over Hollyhocks, Foxgloves, and similar partially evergreen plants whose

Looking Towards the Woods

crowns may rot under too close covering. Over these, and over Dianthus and Pansies it is safer to use a light protection of evergreen branches. Such winter shelter is not used to keep out frost, but to prevent alternate freezing and thawing which throws roots and bulbs out of the ground and plays havoc generally, also to discourage sudden bursts of untimely energy which may come to the most seasoned old perennials if an Indian Summer descends upon them in mid-winter.

Now, too, all stakes are gathered up and put in readiness for another year; new plants are labelled, old foliage and stalks burned up,—not put on the compost heap, and in short everything made ready for the garden's long winter nap. In Spring there is such a rush of work that it is impossible to look after minor details, and every bit accomplished in the Fall is a distinct gain.

I feel sure that no one but a real garden enthusiast would have trudged through these borders with me, and I quite understand the feelings of those who skip this technical lore, for I have too often been obliged by convention to listen to other peoples' "enthusiasms." Even a golfer does not find another's game, served cold and bit by bit from the first to the eighteenth hole, quite as interesting as his own. But at least on the printed pages one can pick and choose and look hopefully ahead to the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

The Woods and the Wild Garden

In the development of a place, however small, the feminine element in the family should not absorb all the interests, and it is a mistake to relegate the sterner sex to the rôle of mere plumber's assistant to hold, not the candle, but the watering can.

There are plenty of hobbies for the whole family, and the sooner they are given scope the better for the happiness and growth of both the place and its owners. If the feminine side has already taken to itself the flower garden, as usually happens, and if vegetables fail to stir masculine enthusiasm, there are yet other interests which make a strong appeal.

Most men like to work with trees, either planting them singly about the grounds, or reforesting, or, if all else fails, cutting them down. If you are fortunate enough to have a piece of woods on your place, or room enough to plant one, there are endless possibilities, and the flower grower must look to her laurels (or her roses) or she will soon be outstripped by the keeper of the forest.

A bit of woodland is often included in a farm, and should be a great inducement to its purchase. Yet I know many owners of such woods who never use them except, perhaps, for an occasional picnic or for shooting in the Fall. There is a mistaken idea, too often

current in this country, that woods must be left undeveloped and untouched, in short, what is called "wild." The idea is carried so far that in many cases in the Adirondacks owners of fine camps let huge dead trees lie outside their door (to be clambered over day after day), with the conviction that they make the place look natural. It is rather akin to the popular idea that going unwashed and unshaved adds to the enjoyment of a holiday.

It is quite true that fallen trees are natural, but why it should be considered necessary to surround oneself with such natural decay and inconvenience I cannot imagine. I have often longed to clear these camp-sites, and to replace the sprangling dead branches with new evergreens, to allow the lovely moss and ferns to grow and spread in sunlight, and to add to the planting Partridge Berries, Wintergreen, and all the fascinating woodsy things which are also "natural."

I speak with warmth for in my own evolution I, too, have gone through this mania for leaving nature alone. For years I resented any suggestion as to improvement in our ten acres of woods, and it was not until I had seen how intelligent care and clearing of underbrush can convert a ragged wood-lot into a lovely bit of forest that I began to realize the possibilities in our own. Here is opportunity for a hobby that builds, not for its day alone, but for generations to come, and there are few men who do not find in it a source of intense interest and pleasure. Beside it the "daily dozen" sinks into pale insignificance, and may be abandoned without a qualm.

The road through our woods, which is a continuation of the flower-border path and its *raison d' etre,* was in existence when we took the place, and had probably been the road from the house to the little saw-mill which the old parson owner built on the creek. If so, it is the only bit of evidence left of his wood-cutting activities, and I can only think that he must have confined himself largely to other peoples' lumber. The old Hemlocks and Beeches, which are the ancients of the woods, must have been fair-sized trees even when the saw-mill was in existence, and now they are veritable giants.

For years this roadway was the only path through the woods. I have an idiosyncrasy for disliking to return from any place over the same route by which I went. This is basely ascribed to an animal instinct which leads every creature of the wild to attempt to cover up its tracks, but I prefer to call it a liking for variety and even an æsthetic sense. By whatever name it may be called, this peculiarity had no encouragement in the route to and from the creek. It was possible to skirt the woods to the west and struggle through the brambles and tangled growth of the unused fields there, but it was not an experience that even the strongest idiosyncrasy could long survive.

As Adam's time and energies were entirely engrossed by the work of the garden and house it was impossible to expect him to do any work in the woods, except his winter occupation of cutting out fallen or dying trees for firewood. Things, therefore, remained *in statu quo* for many years, throughout which there was

frequent question and debate as to what should be done with the woods.

It seemed reasonable to suppose that the best of the young trees should be assisted by clearing them of underbrush, thus giving them a chance to get sunshine and moisture. On the other hand, there was the theory that the law of the survival of the fittest should prevail, that the best trees would naturally outgrow the poor ones, and that the forest should take care of itself in its own way. As the latter theory coincided with convenience it was accepted, but the significant fact remained that the woods were seldom used. This condition prevails, I am sure, with most people who combine woods and moderate means, but with a little time and thought it can be remedied, and will not only open up an absorbing interest for some member of the family, but will make the woodland a place to be lived in and enjoyed like the rest of the property.

This we discovered when we began to cut new paths, for until one can walk about in them how is it possible to know the beauty of one's woods? Such clearing does not necessitate skilled advice, nor does it involve cutting down any large trees, but it needs thought and preliminary study as to where one wants to go and what one wants to see or do. A path leading nowhere and with no attractions will not be used, and will therefore be difficult to keep up. It should be planned with some object,—such as collecting firewood, riding or shooting, or to lead to some favorite spot or view. Having decided the general direction, it is wise to take the line of least resistance among the trees, noting

where there are particularly pretty features to be seen, and where a vista may be enjoyed. Go over this until you are sure it is better than any other route before you actually begin cutting. Then a brush scythe, a pair of clippers, and a hatchet are necessary implements,—the scythe to cut a path through the underbrush wide enough for two people to walk comfortably abreast (about five feet), the clippers to lop off lower branches and tough bits, and the hatchet for heavier work. Seedling trees can be pulled up by hand, and for this stout old gloves are advisable.

The loveliest of our new paths is called the White Birch Path after the fine Canoe Birch which marks its opening, for every path must have a distinguishing name. Its course lies between the dense outer belt of young Hemlocks and the inner forest of huge old trees which are their progenitors. Among these giants are also ancient Beeches which have taken on a pale green patina that gives them an ethereal beauty, and slim Silver Birches which add an effect of light grace. Beneath them there is sufficient sunlight to encourage Maiden Hair Ferns, and there is a spreading clump of Creeping Hemlock fifteen feet in diameter, near which we are naturalizing English Bluebells (Scilla campanulata nutans) in the hope that we may get even a suggestion of the never to be forgitten loveliness of the Beech wood of Kew Gardens in Bluebell time.

Outside the main woods there are other walks, all linked up with the wood paths and leading eventually to the river. These have been cut with a brush scythe

through rough brambles and secondary growth, and it is astonishing to see how quickly they become covered with moss and Ground Pine and assume a look of age and long use. The cutting of all these paths, both inside the woods and outside, is done twice a year, in early Summer and Fall, and this is quite sufficient to keep them in good condition.

The Beech Path lies outside the woods, and leads from the end of the flower border to a knoll crowned with an enormous old Beech. The top of this tree has been destroyed but its lateral branches spread out to form a dense roof of greenery, beneath which, and quite concealed from the outer world by a circle of young Beeches springing up, there lies a delightful inner chamber of light and shade. Here logs form seats where one can lean back against the tree's giant bole, and peeping through a round clipped aperture obtain a view of the driveway entrance, and,—possible callers. In this safe retreat the lovely Narcissus Poeticus has been planted in hundreds, and spills down the sides of the knoll under pink blossoms of wild apple and cherry.

Another path leads to the Arbor Vitæ grove where, in the thick mossy carpet of the children's "little rooms," naturalized Daffodils shine like stars. Another skirts reforested plantations of White Pines, Spruces, and Larches and comes out quite suddenly above the river upon a magnificent view lying framed between two giant Pines. Down three rude steps cut in the side of the cliff, there is a seat quite concealed from the uninitiated, and here one can look from the

top of the world up the far distant reaches of the river. The Pines lean at a perilous angle far out from the side of the bank, and between them one might expect a view of Fujiyama's snow-tipped cone, but instead there is a panorama of river, dark fir-clad island, rolling meadows, and a steep hill crowned with cone-shaped Cedars.

In this seat, poised high up between swish of Pines and water, one can lose oneself in a maze of dreams, and see the beauties of the seasons come and go from shore to hill-top,—the tender green and pinks of Spring, the lush exuberance of Summer, the flaming glory of Autumn with its pale scarlets and deep maroons and, lastly, the blue and purple shadows of Winter with the Pines, still green, framing their picture of glistening ice beyond and deep black pool beneath.

A trail along the top of the bank leads us back to the woods through a grove of young Red Oaks and Poplars, and I must stop to say a good word for the latter for too often they are thoughtlessly cleared away without any realization of their use or beauty. A prejudice seems to exist against Poplars, perhaps because of their lack of commercial value or their short span of life, but they are delightful whether in Spring, when their pale gray-green bark and haze of dim leaf buds gives them the effect of little ghost trees, or in Fall, when their leaves are pure gold. I am speaking of our native trees not, of course, of the Lombardy Poplar which is valuable as an accent in the landscape, but which should be used with restraint and discre-

tion. Nor do I refer to the Carolina Poplar, so often used for street planting, which suggests German beer gardens and trees in tubs. Our Poplars are of two kinds, the Silver Poplar (Populus alba) which grows to be a large tree with leaves very downy white underneath, and the American Aspen (Populus tremuloides) colloquially called "popple," whose little round leaves, constantly tremulous, have given rise to the expression "Shaking like an aspen." It is this delicate little American Aspen, very like a White Birch, which grows among the Oaks and gives them shelter when young, like a nurse who will soon be outgrown and overtopped by her nurslings.

This seems an appropriate moment, as we have reached the woods, to speak of elementary forestry and cutting in general, and as the proverb, "Spare the rod and spoil the child" is sometimes in these modern days interpreted as "Spare the rod or spoil the child,"—so there may be a point of debate between "Spare the axe and spoil the woods," or "Spare the axe or spoil the woods." Certainly the latter interpretation is safer for the uninitiated who may otherwise have the experience of a friend who was inspired to trim out the lower branches of his evergreens, having heard someone say that trees would do better if so treated. This was a serious matter as the evergreens gave the only shade and shelter to his house on a hilltop. However, no sooner had he grasped the clippers and saw than a fever of energy descended upon him, and nothing could stop him until every tree had lost its petticoat and stood gaunt and naked with the shape and pro-

portions of a feather duster. When he stepped back to survey the result he exclaimed in horror, "I have destroyed in one morning what it has taken the Almighty twenty years to grow."

Between the two extremes of indiscriminate cutting and leaving nature untouched there is, however, a happy medium. To reach it the advice of a landscape architect may be necessary, but of these only the best know very much about the subject, for forestry and what is called "æsthetic forestry" are comparatively new subjects in America, and a training in the first does not necessarily imply a knowledge of the second. If the owner of woods has patience enough to wait and watch his trees, and to read and digest that valuable book "The Care of Trees" by Bernard E. Fernow, Dean of the Faculty of Forestry of the University of Toronto, he may have all the fun of developing his forest himself. This book is clear and comprehensive, giving the theory of the care of trees and the sound common sense reasons that underlie it.

Few people who work with trees have any grasp of the scientific aspect of the subject. They may have been told that a bushel of old potatoes put at the roots of a tree insures success in transplanting, or that certain months are the only ones in which to move evergreens and certain others are imperative for deciduous trees; they lop off or preserve branches with no idea of the balance between roots and top, but simply because someone has said it is the thing to do, and finally, they set out the tree with no regard to its former depth or exposure. Tree moving is a chancy

enough thing at best, but with such haphazard methods it is no wonder that but few of the victims survive.

There is no occult mystery about either the care or transplanting of trees, no dependence upon the changes of the moon and tides, nothing that cannot be grasped by a mere layman with a little study and much experience, but until that is gained it is wise to leave the axe on the wood-pile. In the meantime let no sentimentalist dissuade you from removing all fallen trees and branches as far as lies within your power, with the exception of some picturesque log or stump which may serve as a seat or which has been beautified by moss or ferns. The carpet of wild flowers and ferns that spring up in woods which are kept clear, and the healthy condition of the standing trees repay the effort.

Professor Fernow says,—"A pleasure forest or park woodland is quite different from the usual pleasure park . . . the park is to give pleasure mainly by its artistic elements, the forest or woodland mainly by its natural elements; the park exhibits art with a super imposition of naturalness upon artificially created or preserved groups of trees; the pleasure forest relies upon its *natural* naturalness, with merely a helping hand toward artistic appearance. Hence a let-alone policy is much more desirable in the forest than is possible to permit in the park. But, while the proper principle in the woodland is to let nature take its course, that does not mean that man should not interfere with Nature, for Nature is not always æsthetic, she creates many things that are not

beautiful, and leaves undone many things that man conceives as enhancing natural beauty, for Nature works without object, not even the object to please. Hence the axe and saw are constantly in demand, here to remove a stag-headed tree that has lost its beauty and interferes with a better progeny, or an old trunk that is not only ugly in its unsoundness, but breeds the enemies of the healthy; there a sprawling limb needs lopping, or even a healthy tree or group of trees must be invaded to free a rarer component of the forest which is being choked by its sturdier competitors. There is no part of the park that really requires more judgment in its treatment than this natural woodland." This seems to sum the matter up admirably, and the judgment required will come with time and experience.

Our woodland seems to fall naturally into quite distinct sections of two or three sorts of trees growing together,—Beeches with Hemlocks, Oaks with White Pines, Hemlocks with Silver Birches and Beeches, and Maples with Elms. As this makes the woods much more interesting and varied in walking about from one part to another we try to maintain the character of each section, favoring the predominant trees in our cutting and clearing. There are enough dead or dying trees each year in such a piece of woods to fill all possible needs for firewood, so that one can be very discriminating in clearing for æsthetic reasons.

It adds immeasurably to one's enjoyment to have an occasional seat at some favoured spot where there is a fine view or enchanting surroundings. We have used mossy logs for the most part, but seats of Silver Birch

or any wood with the bark left on are appropriate, and the simpler the better.

It is always possible to add to the beauty of such a woodland by planting flowering trees or shrubs, such as Dogwood, Japanese Cherries, and Rhododendrons; but they seem to belong to the pleasure park as defined by Professor Fernow rather than to the natural woodland. I think if they are used in the latter they should be confined to border planting, perhaps an intermediate step between garden and woods, and if used within the woodland itself should be restrained in character so as to form only occasional "high spots."

Some years ago I ordered some White Canoe Birches to plant against evergreens and to form pictures at the end of certain vistas. Just before they arrived in the Fall I was called away from home, and had to leave the setting out of the trees to an inexperienced man with instructions to plant them as best he could. The following Spring, when I looked for them, there was no sign of anything that looked like White Birch, and I finally came to the conclusion that none had survived. Seven years later, to my complete astonishment, a number of these beautiful trees seemed to leap into the landscape, one forming the terminal of the White Birch Path, and since then they have all emerged from the red-brown bark wrappings which had deceived me, like lovely white moths escaping from a dull cocoon.

Somewhere within or near woods there is usually some spot which is a perfect setting for a wild garden, and this is a form of gardening which is particu-

larly enjoyed by men, perhaps because it involves collecting, and adventurous trips in strange swamps and forests, or perhaps because it is less artificial than the formal garden, and brings beauty out of waste.

Such a setting is provided on our place by the pond from which I thought I could get leaf mould for the borders in their first year. It is a narrow reach of water lying at the foot of a steep wooded bank and reflecting the Silver Birches that overhang it. The river runs close to it, and on the slice of land between the two is our wild garden. At one end it is deeply shaded and suited to woods flowers and ferns, and at the other end it broadens out into a sunny little meadow where field flowers flourish and where the pond is edged with Cat-tails and Joe-Pye-Weed.

For years the shaded portion, with pond in the rear and river in front, and sheltered from winds by the high bank, has been a favorite spot for picnics and for quiet afternoons with a book. Here successful clambakes have been carried through, and layer upon layer of good things cooked upon hot stones in a covered pit, or hot suppers have been served in spite of the half-mile distance from the kitchen.

During our first year on the place a friend called the pond the "tarn," a name which in those days suggested a romantic mind and an acquaintance with Walter Scott, but which today comes straight from the Crossword Puzzle Book. It was delightfully inappropriate at first, for the sheet of water was bright and open and the short grass about it full of wild flowers. Gradually, however, wild rushes, which had at first

been merely a few picturesque tufts, spread further and further into a dense mat, crowding out both flowers and grass, and a colony of Hornbeans sprang up all along the shores, giving the place the dank unhealthy look of a Louisiana swamp full of cypress trees. Then, indeed, it was a tarn, or what a tarn sounds like, and I bitterly regretted that I had not realized the danger in time and rooted out the rushes and the black, snake-like Hornbeams.

A year ago the situation was reviewed with grave anxiety, and in looking it over we felt in perfect sympathy with that tragic moment in Alice in Wonderland.

> "If seven maids with seven mops
> Swept it for half a year,
> Do you suppose," the Walrus said,
> "That they could get it clear?"
> "I doubt it," said the carpenter,
> And shed a bitter tear.

However, as the reeds and jungle had to be cleared away somehow, and as we had always talked of having a wild garden there, we decided that the time had come to combine the two efforts,—to clear the ground bit by bit and to plant it at once so as to crowd out the rushes before they could spring up again. Accordingly this Herculean task was begun and, though only a portion has been finished, the work has proved so interesting and the results so satisfactory that it is to be continued until not an ugly feature is left.

The tough Hornbeams, or Blue Beeches, which look and feel like iron, were first cut down, leaving some

beautiful old trees and a few young Ashes, Oaks, and Sweet Birches. Then the mat of reeds, creaking and rustling under foot like dry snakes, was attacked with a mattock and wheeled away to be burnt with brushwood on a most hilarious funeral pyre. The ground was then forked over, inch by inch, and the ubiquitous roots, which run along under ground, were cleaned out as thoroughly as possible. Paths were planned along the edge of the pond and running through the meadow, and the clearing, as far as it was completed, was ready for the new planting. Meanwhile the Ardent Collector was frequenting swamps, bogs, meadows, and woods, and gathering new material and, incidentally, Poison Ivy and bee stings.

All the pretty features about the shores were left and made the most of,—mossy stumps were planted about with Blueberry bushes, Sheep Laurel, and Wintergreen; the tall ferns, which had become established in spite of neglect, were freed from rushes; and the surviving wild flowers and shrubs were given a chance to grow and spread. All along one bank Adam had planted years before a row of Loose Strife, the cherry-colored not the common purple variety. We had started it from seed in the vegetable garden, and the young plants, transferred to the wet ground that they love, grew enormously and are now very lovely blooming along the water side.

Advantage was taken of the varying conditions of shade, sun, water, bog, and meadow furnished by the position of the pond, and plants taken from similar locations were set out in their proper habitat, with

much assistance from the two invaluable books,—"Taming the Wildings" by Herbert Durand, and its companion "Field Book of American Wild Flowers" by F. Schuyler Matthews. It was a matter of real astonishment to see the number of varieties that were gathered in a few weeks, and from no great distance. They lie all about us if only we have eyes to see or a motive for looking.

The Ardent Collector has made a map of the pond and its environs, with the already existing planting noted, and the new material charted and listed,—a feat that the masculine mind can compass with success and enthusiasm. There are sixty-five varieties, some rare and some common, but all hardy in a severe climate.

The rarest and most difficult to gather, and therefore the most interesting to the Ardent Collector, were the native Orchids, of which there are eleven varieties in the wild garden. They were found in marshes and in the Adirondack forest and were planted about the shaded, moist end of the tarn, amongst ferns and wild Forget-me-nots, in soil and conditions duplicating as nearly as possible that in which they had been growing. The list follows:

1. Ladies Tresses (Spiranthus cernua)
2. Spiranthus Romanzoffana
3. Grass Pink (Colopogon Pulchellus)
4. Snake Mouth (Pogonia ophioglossoides)
5. White Fringed Orchis (Habenaria Ciliaris)
6. Ragged Fringed Orchis (H. lacera)
7. Small Purple Fringed Orchis (H. Psycodes)

8. Large Purple Fringed Orchis (H. fimbriata)
9. Small Yellow Lady Slipper (Cypripedium pubescens)
10. Showy Lady Slipper (C. spectabile)
11. Mocassin Flower (C. acaule)

Most of these are fragrant and all have some peculiar beauty. In the water itself were planted a few aquatics:—Arrowhead (Saggitaria latifolia), Pickerel Weed (Pontedoria cordata), Marsh Marigolds (Caltha palustris), Water Cress (Radicula nasturtium-aquaticum), and Water Lilies.

Around the edge, where their roots can reach moisture without standing directly in the water, are Japanese Iris (an overflow from my borders), Cardinal Flower (Lobelia cardinalis), Marsh St. John's Wort (Hipericum virginicum), Purple Loose Strife (Lythrum salicaria), and Blue Flag (Iris versicolor).

About the stumps and logs and making bold groups in shade are Sheep Laurel (Calmia augustifolia), Wild Wood Lilies (Lilium Canadense), False Spikenard (Smilacina racemosa), Solomon's Seal (Pologonatum biflorum), False Solomon's Seal (Smilacina stellata), Giant Lobelia (L. syphilitica), and Rose Mallow (Hibiscus Moscheutus).

In digging these showy plants the Ardent Collector did not neglect the more modest little flowers which fill in chinks and thrive in shade and black leaf mould, among these are Hepaticas, Bunch Berries (Cornus Canadensis), Wintergreen (Gaultheria procumbens), Shin Leaf (Pyrona elliptica and P. secunda), Wood Anemones, Round-Leaved Sundew (Drosera rotundifolia), Wood Sorrel (Oxalis), and Forget-me-nots.

Within a few miles of us lies a swamp which is

one of the few spots in the State where Rhododendrons (R. Maximum) grow wild. From it we have gathered some young plants, with the decayed wood and leaf mould in which they were growing, and have transplanted them into the same conditions on rotting logs beside the pond. Apparently they have suffered no set back, and we have hopes of establishing a colony of them in future years.

The rest of the wild garden is made up for the most part of wild flowers which thrive in the sun. The majority are set in clumps or long plantings in the bit of sunny meadow, not at random in the middle but growing against a background of Arbor Vitæ and dense thorn trees, or outlining paths. These are:

Oswego Tea (Monarda didyma)
Wild Bergamot (Monarda fistulosa)
Blue Toadflax (Linaria Canadensis)
Butter and Eggs (L. vulgaris)
Turtle Head (Chelone glabra)
Bell Flower (Campanula rapunculoides)
Blue Vervain (Verbena hastata)
Chicory (Chicorium Intybus)
Job's Tears (Tradescantia Virginiana)
Jewel Weed (Impatiens pallida)
Common Mallow (Malva rotundifolia)
Sneeze Weed (Helenium)
Robins Plantain (Erigeron pulchellus)
Perennial Foxgloves (Digitalis ambigua)
False Dragon Head (Physostegia)
Bottle Gentian (Gentiana Andrewsii)
Hardhack (Spirea tomentosa)
Lemon Lily (Hermerocallis flava)
Bouncing Bet (Saponaria officinalis)
Sweet Clover.

There are also Golden Rod in variety, New England Asters, New York Asters, Pannicled Asters, and several other varieties, with an endless number still to collect along our roadsides.

At the sunny end of the pond are masses of Joe-Pye-Weed (Eupatorium purpureum), Boneset (E. perfoliatum), and Ironweed (Veronica novaboracensis).

This is not a bad collection to have made in a short time, but it only scratches the surface of the treasures to be had. In a little pocket "Flower Guide" by Chester A. Reed, which gives the commoner wild flowers and is most convenient for identification in the field, there are illustrations of three hundred and twenty flowers, and these do not cover all the varieties described in the book, nor nearly all those to be found.

It is always a temptation to bring garden flowers into such a spot, but it must be sternly repressed or the "wild" character of the planting will be destroyed. An exception is made of Japanese Iris which is, after all, in its proper setting beside water.

The making of such a garden as I have described will prove absorbing to the tired business man, and will tax all his ingenuity and imagination.

In clearing out the rushes we came upon the overgrown pit of former clam-bakes, and I was reminded of an amusing incident which occurred many years ago. In preparation for a picnic a dozen bottles of beer were laid in the shallow water of the river bed to cool, but when everything was ready, and hungry and thirsty guests sat down to eat, it was discovered that the river had risen and the beer was nowhere to be found. Six

or seven years later I told the story to a very deaf gentleman as we sat beside the river, and from his expression, fixed and intent upon the water, I was not sure that he had heard me. Imagine my astonishment when, without a word and in full regalia, he walked knee deep into the rushing current and pulled out bottle after bottle of beer, five of them, which somehow had withstood ice, freshets, and breakage, and had evaded our vigilance through all that passage of time.

I scarcely think there is much chance of coming upon such a cache in the "crik" nowadays, but there are other kinds of possibilities in the wild garden and the tarn.

CHAPTER XII

Making Pictures

Alas, that there are so many gardens laid out in the same way and planted with the same flowers! Where so many are alike the question naturally arises in one's mind whether the people who make them are all of the same pattern. I think it is rather that most amateur gardeners have not yet learned to express themselves in their planting or design, and merely imitate what they have seen repeatedly in other gardens.

Originality is a rare gift in gardening as in everything else, and we cannot all reach the highest level of unusual and delightful effects; but, keeping an open mind, we can all learn and improve by going to see really good gardens, by study, and, above all, by actual experience, in acquiring which, meanwhile, we can have a thoroughly good time.

If you start out with an idea that "bedding" is never used any more and is utterly impossible, or that formal gardens are too stiff, or that certain colors in flowers are hideous, or any other hidebound prejudice, you will fail to see much that is lovely, suggestive, and possibly quite appropriate to your own planting. All these things which seem to you undesirable may have a proper place or a right color combination, and their wholesale dismissal indicates only an ignorance of the true art of gardening.

In the long run personality, like murder, will out, and when a gardener has ceased to be a timid imitator, and begins to make his garden the way he likes it himself, it is as possible to form an idea of his tastes from his garden as it is from the furnishings of his house. His temperament may prefer formality and classic beauty, and may find expression in a restrained and elegant Italian garden or in the "strictly tailored" little beds of some back yard. Another temperament may prefer freedom and lack of restraint, another look only for quaintness and fragrance, another enjoy the difficult and rare, and so on through a long list.

There are many conditions which may influence and limit these expressions, such as lack of money, time, or strength, and there is one cardinal virtue which should control them all,—appropriateness; but when these adjustments have been made each individual is entitled to carry out his particular fancy and create a garden that is really his own.

I find that my own inclination is always toward making a picture in the landscape, and this is fortunate as it is the quality most needed in building up a country place. The canvas is large and demands broad strokes and a feeling for effect. First the background must be considered,—woods, trees, shrubs; then the house, with as much rolling lawn spreading away from it as can be afforded, for lawns give a sense of space and serenity; and then the painter can judge what is most needed to give his picture life and warmth. Do the house and the lie of the land call for a formal garden, or a little intimate one close by? Where would a bold

splash of color brighten the dark background, or just what is needed to conceal a discordant feature in the landscape?

When once this looking for a picture has become habitual (and it can be acquired) it leads to all sorts of delightful suggestions. Look everywhere to make a picture,—at the end of a vista, in the corner of a wall, against dark evergreens, or beneath arching shrubbery. I can best explain this by describing some of my own brushwork and telling how it came about.

In writing about the development of a country place, however simple, I may seem to be discussing a subject which can have no interest for those whose gardens lie within a small city plot, yet the principles of gardening are the same everywhere, and size has nothing to do with quality,—the best things often come in small packages. In the country all sorts of gardens can be tried out, and among them is sure to be one which would fit equally well in the small plot.

I am thinking now not of my borders, but of a small garden which has just finished its first blooming season. It is the result of a prolonged and earnest looking for pictures, and fills a long-felt want. I have spoken before of my desire to have a garden which could be enjoyed from the verandah, and of the difficulties in the way, among them the large shade-trees and the inadvisability of cutting up the lawn. Eventually I found the right spot, and by planting a background made it possible to have a charming little picture visible from the house, yet possessing the necessary privacy and enclosure.

I made this little garden oval, a design which is not too common and which fits its situation perfectly. It lies with rising ground and trees as a background on one side, and opens on the other into a bowling green surrounded by an Arbor Vitae hedge. It consists of an oval grass plot enclosed by four beds, which are separated from each other by narrow grass walks. In the centre a flat limestone holds a shallow green bowl of Italian pottery as a birds' bath. A bit of moss filled with Bluets forms an island in the water, and a tendril of myrtle trails over on the stone, about which are clumps of Narcissi, Aquilegias, and Violas. There is a triangular planting of Japanese Barberries behind each bed to square the oval and give immediate background, and at the far end to enclose the garden from the meadow are Lilacs, Japanese Quince, Philadelphus Virginale, Shad Bush, and White Pines.

The garden oval is forty feet long from end to end, and its beds are but three feet wide. It is designed to give continuous bloom from May to October and to have plenty of color, for it must continually be on parade and have no shabby dull season. To accomplish this I supplement perennials with annuals and use Geraniums as late fillers. In such a small space one cannot expect miracles, and bedding plants can be substituted for past glories to keep a garden pleasantly gay.

Each of the four beds is planted alike, for this is a formal little garden, but the varieties and colors vary slightly. First to bloom this year, even before the snow was quite off them, were Pansies in shades of

bronze, yellow, and purple, and these continued to flower without any slackening until they were again snowed under. They formed the inside edging of the beds and behind them, and next to bloom, were six varieties of splendid Tulips, two sorts in each bed. These were Dream, Clara Butt, Bronze Queen, Pride of Haarlem, Cardinal Manning, and Inglescome Yellow. Next came German Iris,—Isolene, Loreley, Sherwin-Wright, Lent A. Williamson, Juniata, White Knight, Nine Wells, and Lord of June. Then Sweet Williams, White Foxgloves, and pink, blue, and white Cup-and-Saucer Canterbury Bells. Overlapping and outlasting these were Belladonna Delphiniums and White Phlox "Miss Lingard," planted alternately at the rear of the beds. Blooming also with the Delphiniums were Candidum Lilies in big groups at the ends of all four beds.

Close after these came annuals crowded in to take the place of the biennials which were pulled up after blooming as they are good only for one year. The annuals were blue Cornflowers, Annual Larkspurs in six lovely shades, and late white Asters.

A big group of Auratum Lilies in the middle of each bed, and the white Geraniums, planted over flowers that had passed, completed the season of this brilliant little garden, which fulfilled its mission and proved a great success.

There is one point to be noted,—I use here a number of flowers which are grown nowhere else on the place,—the particular varieties of Iris, the Pansies, Canterbury Bells, Phlox Miss Lingard, Candidum and

The Oval Garden in Its First Year

Auratum Lilies, and Geraniums. This gives the oval garden a distinctive character of its own and an element of surprise which is one of the greatest charms of all gardening.

It is always a temptation to repeat a successful effect *ad nauseam,* and when plants increase and have to be divided it is quite natural, though a mistake, to tuck them in wherever there is room, but this is a time when self-denial must be practiced, and great generosity shown to one's friends or even to the compost heap.

In discouraging the repeated use of the same flowers all over the place I make an exception of the large perennials, such as Iris, Delphiniums and Phlox, which can be planted in large masses about the grounds, and can be combined in different ways to give quite varied effects.

Sitting in the oval garden with its pleasant afternoon shadows, I look across the wide bowling green to another picture, which can also be enjoyed from the house,—this is a long bed of flowers planted against the Arbor Vitae hedge. It is divided in the middle by a little brick walk and a white gate in the hedge opening on to a meadow roadway, on the farther side of which is a row of young apple trees which promise in a few years to show full heads of pink bloom or scarlet fruit above the evergreens.

In front of this long bed are Breeder Tulips all the way; behind them are German Iris in front of Elizabeth Campbell Phlox, and at the back a tall late white Phlox. This gives a good succession and needs

little care, though it will, of course, require division in time.

It is often a problem to know what to do with the increase of perennials. A large part is needed to replace run-out stock, and with the rest beds can be doubled in size, or the plants massed in large borders such as the one just described.

Iris is one of the greatest multipliers, and as its space in a mixed planting must be limited, it is well to give it a place all to itself. I have adopted this plan, and have a long Iris border with a background of shrubs which screens my trial nursery and cold frames from the garden walk. The soil at one end is specially prepared with a mixture of woods earth and cow manure for Japanese Iris, and the rest is sandy loam mixed with lime and bone meal for German Iris. By throwing out poor varieties this takes care of the overflow for the present.

Another enormous grower is Phlox, and this requires watching. Many people are imbued with the notion that Phlox "reverts" and in some mysterious way is transformed into the common purplish species. As a matter of fact there is no such mystery. Phlox is a profuse seeder when ripe but does not seed true; the seedlings spring up around the parent crowns and cannot be detected until they bloom when they usually prove to be small and bad in color. If they are not immediately removed they may crowd out the finer varieties and the so-called "reversion" is complete.

I buy a few new varieties each Fall, one of each kind, and set them in a row in the trial garden to be

tested for size and color. If they prove desirable it is only two years before the original roots will have grown into clumps large enough to be transplanted into the garden.

When my herbaceous borders were remade a year ago, and the Phlox was necessarily divided and replanted, the surplus of Phloxes was simply appalling. It suggested, not little pictures here and there, but a great panorama, and the inevitable setting for this was at the foot of the lawn and meadow with a background of dense trees, and nothing to obstruct a view of it from the house.

As prepared beds on such a scale were out of the question, the ground was merely ploughed and harrowed, and the clumps were set out in broad curving masses in front of the trees. This gorgeous mass of color, about five hundred feet long, is one of the best pictures of all. In such naturalizing it cannot be expected that the individual flowers will be of the same size as under cultivation, but, after all, that is not the object, and the broad pictorial effects seen at a distance are fine.

Even an unsightly feature like the compost heap can be screened off and beautified by planting, and it is well to consider the possibilities of such pictures before one has grown so accustomed to the offensive object as to be unconscious of its existence.

At the very entrance to my borders there remained for years a disgraceful heap of old boards covering a hole at the bottom of which was a convergence of water pipes. Though a sense of shame often stirred

me to try to think of a better substitute for the rotting planks, I was somewhat hampered by the fact that the pipes must be drained and the hole filled with leaves every Fall to prevent freezing. At last a scheme occurred to me which combined use and beauty, and I wondered why I had put up with the ugly feature so long. Around the hole a low limestone wall was built in a square, but with the opening made round. In this aperture, and exactly fitting it, a shallow copper basin was set flush with the coping of the wall, and painted turquoise blue. A small pipe from below furnishes water, and a lining of moss at the edge keeps the copper from overheating in the sun and from being slippery so that it is constantly in use as a birds' bath. In the Fall the basin is lifted out and the pipes protected for the Winter.

The wall has raked joints which are filled here and there with rock plants, and about it is an irregular shaped planting which leaves much of the stonework exposed. Creeping Euonymus throws its light fretwork over the stone, a low gray Juniper nestles at one side, and over all arches a slender Shad Bush.

At the rear the planting consists of Japanese Iris which gets the benefit of the overflow from the basin. The German Iris likes a hot sun-baked soil, but the Japanese needs moisture about its roots, except in Fall and Winter. It is far the loveliest Iris to plant about a pool for the foliage arches over and suggests wind and water all through the Summer, whereas the bearded sorts are as stiff as palm leaf fans after their flowering is past.

The Fountain

There is one element in this picture which I can recommend both for its beauty and because it is so easy to obtain. This is the Shad Bush (Amalancher Canadensis), also called May Cherry and Service Tree. It is a common little tree of our roadsides and fields, and in May, when its graceful white flowers and bronze leaves stand out in the landscape, it is a thing of breathless beauty. I know nothing to compare with it (except the Japanese Cherry which is far less hardy in the North), and it should be used as an occasional accent, against evergreens, or, as here, over water, but not so frequently as to lose the quality of surprise.

The square wall was built by a local mason, and the joints were raked surreptitiously by me, quite upsetting his idea of the fitness of well-filled, smooth stone work. The copper basin was made by the village plumber, and the whole was accomplished at no great expense, proving that this picture might just as well have been seen long before.

Later a small fountain was happened upon, and now the birds' bath is completed with a laughing bronze boy whose hands are uplifted to a tiny jet of water shot upward by a frog at his feet.

When a picture is finished one naturally looks for the best vantage point from which to see it, and it soon became evident that the delightful little boy should occupy the end of a vista. The rear of the old shrubbery furnished one side of such an approach and it was not difficult to plant a Snowberry hedge parallel to it to outline a long grass walk at the end of which

the bronze boy, the circle of water in gray stone, and the tender colored flowers show to perfection.

As the grass walk had no particular interest looked at from the fountain end of the vista, it was obvious that some feature should be added to furnish a motive for looking through the other end of the telescope. Stone steps were, therefore, set in the slope where the path begins, and they not only give a look of age and permanence, but also render the descent easy and induce one to linger to enjoy the view. The placing of the steps was a puzzle as I had no idea how to go about it, but there are few problems which cannot be worked out if one experiments with materials on the spot, and I must reiterate my assurance that amateur gardeners can have all the fun of doing their own planning if only they will have confidence in themselves and look for pictures.

In this absorbing pursuit one thing must surely lead to another,—the ugly hole led to the building of the birds' bath, the bath to the fountain, the fountain to the vista, and the vista to the steps,—like the House that Jack Built. The Snowberry hedge along the grass walk led in its turn to a new and very tiny Spring garden, for it formed a border to the third side of an odd three cornered patch, two sides of which were already bounded by an Arbor Vitae hedge and shrubs. The triangular space thus furnished with a background of green was too much for the picture-loving eye, and it was inevitable that advantage should be taken of it for a garden.

A Spring garden, where the joyous rush of one sea-

son could be enjoyed to the full without thought or care for what should come after, was a luxury that I had longed for, and here was a spot tiny enough to add but little to the labor of the place, and so enclosed that it might be ignored when its beauty was over. Such a temptation could not be resisted, and the only difficulty was to plan some means of giving the plot design and shape, for it was a crooked corner with no two sides or angles the same length or size, and it could not be cut down from the outside into any suitable geometrical figure.

I asked for suggestions from friends, and even offered a prize for the best competitive design in the family, but the final solution was the result of long contemplation from the vantage point of a little canvas chair easily moved about the enclosure, and the employment of much cord and many stakes. If the outlines of the plot could not be changed it was only common sense to perceive that the design must come from within, and accordingly a little walk of square stepping stones (cut from discarded city pavement) was laid around a central grass plot rather in the shape of a pear. With this design in the middle it makes no difference that the outer dimensions are haphazard.

Around the small end of the pear is a curved bed, the dominant feature of which is a Rosa Hugonis bush whose lovely yellow flowers crowd along wide spreading branches in May. Beneath are Iris "La Neige" and "Blue Boy", yellow Primroses, Grape Hyacinth "Heavenly Blue", Tulip "Picotee", Forget-me-not "Royal Blue", Narcissi "Argent" and "Dorothy

Wemys", Perennial Cornflowers, and Maiden Hair Fern.

One long side of the pear is formed by the Snowberry hedge and a narrow bed of Scilla campanulata "Blue Queen", "Excelsior", and "Alba Maxima" interspersed with Forget-me-nots and Grape Hyacinths.

The other long side has the Arbor Vitae hedge as a background and against it a wide bed contains tall Ferns, Bleeding Heart, and Solomon's Seal. In front of these are long plantings of the Tulips "Mrs. Moon", "John Ruskin", "Sirene", "Melicette", "Gesneriana Lutea Pallida", and "Isabella". In front of these are Pyrethrums, Pansies, and white Violas.

At the broad base of the pear the curved bed is filled at the back with Siberian Iris, which prolong the Spring bloom and form a dense but graceful background. In front of these, to lend body and importance to the planting, are white Dictamnus Fraxinella, Japanese and single Peonies, "Mikado", "Pride of Langport" and "Albeflora The Bride", and Viburnum Carlesi. Through the centre of the bed run Aquilegias and Lupines, and in front, intermingled with Nepeta Mussini, and edged with Forget-me-nots, are many bulbs,—the Tulips "Jubilee", Flamingo (Darwin) and Ges. Lutea Pallida, and the Narcissi "Triumph", "Whitewell", "Laurens Koster" and "Albatross", and English Bluebells.

Behind this bed we have massed Spring flowering shrubs to fill out the crooked space at the end, mostly named Lilacs, and among them three flowering Crabs,

—Malus floribundus, M. Parkmanii and M. Sargenti. Beyond these a young willow adds to the Spring gaiety.

There are other delectable pictures which I would like to show,—such as the clearing in the woods where I hope some day to grow all sorts of wild Asters (Michaelmas Daisies), keeping it as a little hidden garden to be visited only when there is a haze of lavender and violet bloom, but I shall spare my readers the gardens of my imagination and take them for a last glimpse of my Rose Garden, which shows some new and successful features.

The two beds where formerly Asparagus made giant growth, are now devoted to Darwin Tulips which attain such a grand height and coloring that it is evident that the heavily enriched soil suits them equally well. They dominate the garden during their season, and when their bloom is over I fill the beds with a white carpet of dwarf Sweet Alyssum edged with lavender-blue Ageratum. This is not the arduous bedding scheme that it sounds, for the Tulips are left in the ground and come up year after year, and the annuals grow readily from seed sown over the bulbs, needing only occasionally to be pieced out in spots with an extra supply of seedlings from the hot-beds.

I use these annuals for two reasons,—first because they are low-growing and quiet-colored and do not disturb the view of the outer beds, which, when the Tulips are over, become the decorative feature, and secondly because their shallow roots and light foliage

admit the necessary sunshine and heat to the Tulips beneath.

My experience indicates that in a warm sandy soil like ours Tulips do not need to be lifted every year, if they are so planted as to allow a thorough baking during their period of rest. I have not grown them long enough to make my experience of much value, but so far they have multiplied rather than decreased, except in shaded situations such as under shrubs or among crowded planting in the border.

One contribution only I can make to the theory of Tulip growing and this is so amusing that it sounds as absurd as the popular superstition that carrying a horse chestnut will ward off rheumatism,—but let me explain. For many years I was discouraged from trying to grow Tulips by the difficulties of my neighbors, whose bulbs were eaten by meadow-mice or moles before they could push their leaves through the ground. In one case only seven bulbs survived out of two hundred, and in another, where many hundreds were planted, the very few which reached blossoming were, even then, consumed below the ground and were found to have only a fragment of bulb attached.

When I finally determined that I must have Tulips in spite of this menace, I made use of "a little invention of my own", as the White Knight used to say, and in setting the bulbs powdered each one with Cayenne pepper and put two or three moth balls with it in the hole. I had used moth balls with success in keeping away cucumber bugs, and this suggested their use, but whether it is due to them, or to the red pepper, or to

mere chance I cannot say,—but the fact remains that except for one year when the mice were exceedingly bad I have lost very few Tulips.

My pictures so far seem to be all away from the house, and I have already said that beds of flowers directly around the foundation are not appropriate to all styles of houses. But it is always pleasant to have a few splashes of color visible from the windows, and there are often spots where bulbs, Pansies, or similar flowers can be grown among the shrubs.

There is such a place beneath my sitting-room windows where the ground slopes sharply down to a group of Spruces. This bank is planted thickly with Daffodils of many fine sorts, and among them and flowering with them are Spirea Thunbergii, Polyantha Primrose, and pale blue Creeping Phlox "G. F. Wilson". No matter how snow-covered and ice-bound the Daffodils may be in Spring they never fail to prick through eventually and cover a long period with their bloom.

Daffodils are so beautiful and come when we are so hungry for flowers that the choicer varieties are well worth buying, and restocking occasionally if they run out, and the hardier sorts will multiply and furnish a constant supply for naturalizing. They are enchanting naturalized in an apple orchard or among White or Silver Birches. With the threat of an embargo on Daffodils hanging over us we indulged recklessly in bulbs this year and planted them all along the rear of the windbreak where they will have background and protection, and where they will be succeeded by Foxgloves. The latter are raised from our own seed, sown

as soon as ripe, and the result is a close moss-like covering of seedlings. Foxgloves do well naturalized in this way, and can be grown with delightful effect along woodland paths.

In developing a place it is well to remember that there should be some boundary between the cultivated portions and the wild. Make some line of division between the rough fields and lawn, farm crops and garden. The division of whatever character it may be,—fence, wall, hedge, or shrubbery, may not be necessary for protective purposes, but its suitability and aesthetic value will at once be recognized when it is established.

Another feature which goes far in improving a country place is the planting of trees to outline the roadways. Aside from our footpaths through the woods and meadows we have roads, or rather wheel-tracks, leading to the distant spot where ashes and tin cans are buried, to the hayfield, and in other directions where the ubiquitious Ford truck is constantly used. These are bordered by trees taken from the place, and planted late in the Fall when garden work is over.

Before I finish these hints and suggestions for picture making I must sound a note of warning, for there are dangers to be avoided in this fascinating pursuit,—there is such a thing as being over-picturesque, of overlaying rather than enhancing Nature. The tendency must be resisted to make every natural feature a little different from what it really is, and the effort should be made to draw attention to beauties already in exist-

ence, rather than to transform them into something less natural and appropriate.

As in women's fashions, at present, long straight lines prevail, and the day of the gusset, the gore, and myriads of fitted seams is past; so also in gardening, simplicity and suitability are the modern keynotes, and no longer do we find pleasure in grottoes, fantastic summer houses, elaborate rustic work, or over ornamentation of any sort.

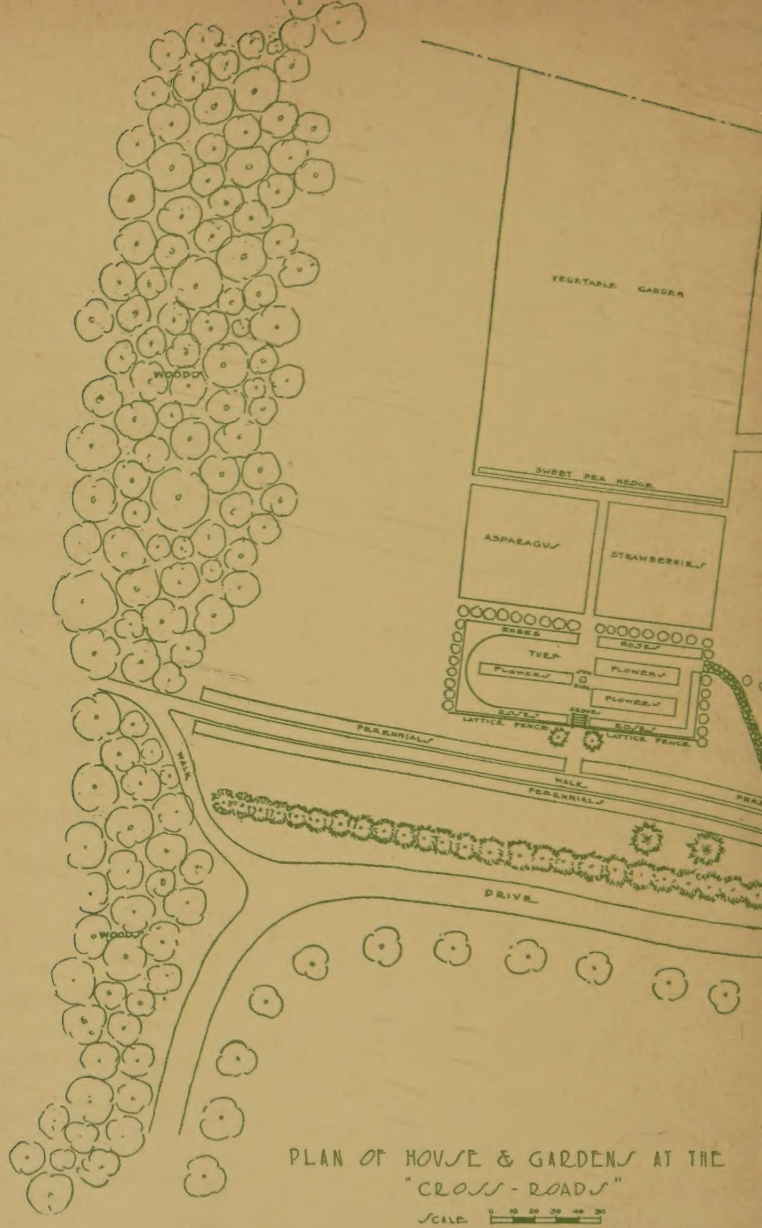
At a recent Flower Show in New York there was an exhibit of models of houses and gardens, and even among these there were some which made the mistake of being over-picturesque. In a restricted space there were crowded too many pergolas, arches, and flowering vines, so that all real effect was lost in confusion. If such a thing is possible in an exhibition of this sort what can be expected of the planting of less experienced folk? It is not to be wondered at that in driving through the country one sees automobile tires utilized as edgings for round beds in the lawn, rowboats (far from their natural element) filled with China Asters and Petunias, and everywhere the ever-useful drain-pipe up-ended to hold Nasturtiums.

We are all striving for good taste, both in the house and outside, and should resolutely turn our backs on this tendency to make a travesty of Nature.

Good taste is the Golden Mean between extremes, and its acquirement will come with observation and experience. If only I could put into these pages a fraction of my own enthusiasm and pleasure in gardening I feel sure that I could inspire others to pursue this

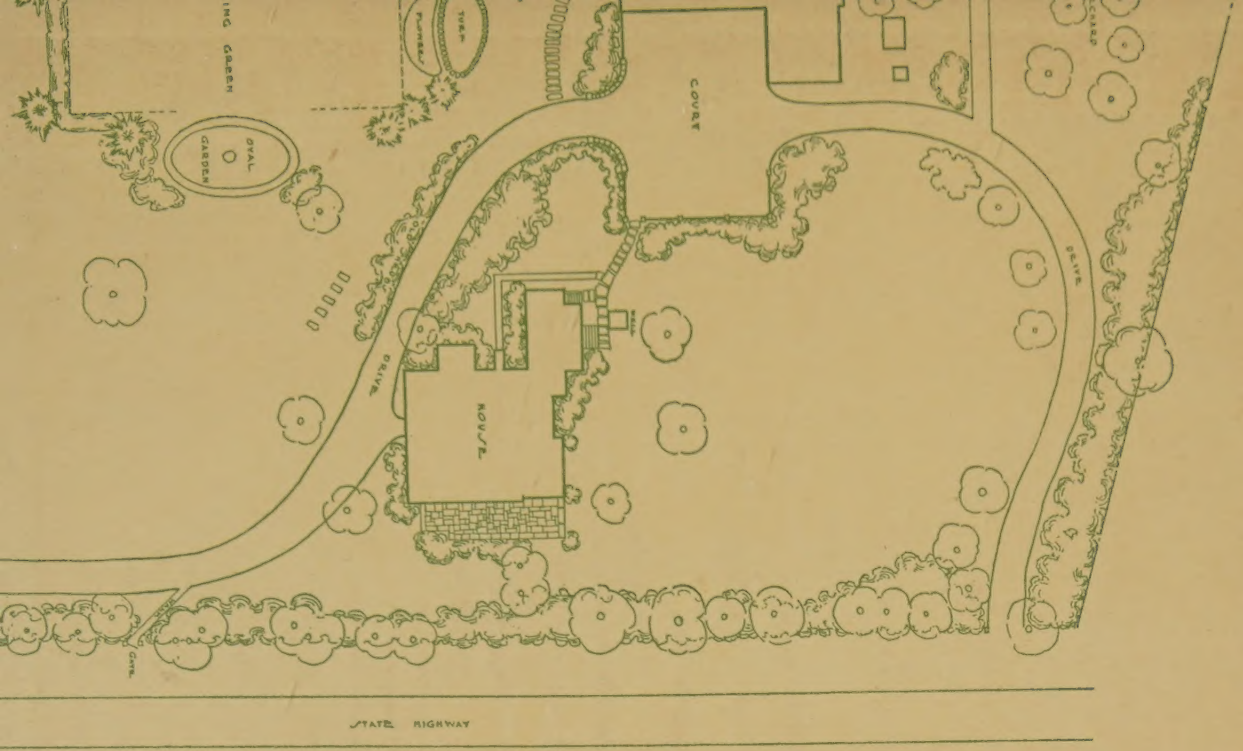
experience, but something more than mere assertion is needed.

Perhaps the wisest approach is to suggest to a novice, or to a lukewarm gardener, that if one sort of gardening makes no appeal there are yet others among which there will surely be one to strike a warm response. A second piece of advice is expressed in the homely adage, "Don't bite off more than you can chew," and thirdly and lastly, is an assurance that success brings enjoyment and enthusiasm, though I have a strong suspicion that, after all, it is love of gardening that brings the success.



PLAN OF HOUSE & GARDENS AT THE "CROSS-ROADS"

SCALE 0 10 20 30 40 50


ING GARDEN
OVAL GARDEN
COURT
HOUSE
STATE HIGHWAY

814-AAZ-330